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FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

AN ESSAY

ON ITS

NATURE, EXCELLENCE, IMPORTANCE,

AND

Means of IMPROVEMENT.

By RICHARD JONES.

ACQUAINT now thyself with him, Job xxii. 21.

Quocunque abiero, ibi erit Sol—ibi Luna—
IBI COLLOQUIA CUM DEO.
(Ἡ πρὸς θεὸς ὁμιλία.)
ARRIAN: in EPICTET.

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M.DCC.LXXII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

JOSEPH SOUTH, Esq;

SIR,

THIS book treats of the very higheſt kind of FRIENDSHIP: and to which you are not a ſtranger.

I have taken the liberty of inſcribing it to you, in grateful A acknow-

acknowledgment of the FRIENDSHIP which you have ſhewn to me: and as a memorial of the paſtoral relation in which I ſometime ſince ſtood, to a Church in the City, of which you had for many years been a member and an ornament. I know you will have no objection to your name ſtanding in ſuch a connection as that of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD: by means of this FRIENDSHIP, a name becomes excellent upon earth, and is written in heaven.

I thought

I thought FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD a lovely repreſentation of religion; and have therefore carried it to an extent, beyond what I at firſt intended.

Will it be any ſatisfaction to ſuch as pronounce the religion of JESUS defective, in that it does not more largely inculcate human FRIENDSHIP, to be told, that the deſign of it is to reſtore and eſtabliſh the DIVINE?

May this FRIENDSHIP dignify and bleſs the remaining days of your life: and make all beyond, happy and immortal to you!

I am, Sir,

Your reſpectful

and obliged

humble Servant,

Peckham, Surry;
October 20, 1772.

R. J.

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FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD;

A N E S S A Y.

INTRODUCTION.

AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD.

James ii. 23.

ALL men talk of the excellence and pleaſure of FRIENDSHIP—but how few are acquainted with it in this its nobleſt kind and happieſt exerciſe! THE FRIEND OF GOD is an appellation that would do an infinite honour to the moſt glorious angel—but it was given to a man like ourſelves: and to ſtamp

the juſtice of the name and the reality of the character, he was ſtiled ſo by God himſelf: "*Abraham* MY *Friend* *". Yes, the lofty ſoul that is thus characterized by its friendſhip with Deity, was a ſojourner in mortal fleſh: and it was amidſt all the diſadvantages of frail humanity, that it maintained ſuch pure and exalted intercourſe with God, as to be denominated GOD'S FRIEND. A ſingular and a matchleſs title, which the everlaſting goſpel, wherein it is recorded, ſhall perpetuate to the end of the world. Let us hear this with a pious and a generous emulation! and hence form a truer and a higher notion of what, even in the preſent ſtate we are capable of being and enjoying.

* Iſaiah xli. 8.

FRIEND-

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD is an incomparable theme: this includes every idea of majeſty and devotion—and is above all human compoſures: here a celeſtial creature might preach, and all the ſons of glory might attentively and joyfully hear: However, the tranſcendent dignity of this ſubject does not forbid its being handled in our imperfect way: nor muſt we decline to give it our beſt conſideration, though no tongue or pen of man can come up to the grandeur and ſublimity of it.

The miniſters of religion ſhould live to the ſame end for which Chriſt died: viz. *the bringing men to* GOD—to the knowledge, love, and fellowſhip of him in this world, as the beginning of their compleat and final bleſſedneſs in his communion

and preſence in the world to come: to ſerve this great end to the beſt of my power, I have compiled this Treatiſe; the deſign of which is to recommend an humble and habitual intercourſe with Deity, as the eſſence of Religion, and the ſource of rational and permanent happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of FRIENDSHIP *in general.*

FRIENDSHIP has always been held a dear and ſacred name; and reckoned a neceſſary article of human happineſs: we find it in different forms and degrees every where; and men affect it for their credit as well as their comfort—nothing being thought more diſgraceful than to want FRIENDS.

No elevation of rank can ſet mankind above its ſweetneſs and uſe. Kings have laid aſide their crowns and robes of ſtate to indulge to its familiar exerciſes: ALEXANDER con-

quered the world, and when he had done would have found it a wilderneſs, had it not been for ſuch a FRIEND as his EPHESTION. The man whoſe ambition and ſelfiſhneſs would have graſped the whole world, could nevertheleſs acknowledge ANOTHER SELF in his *Friend* *.

The neareſt and deareſt relations of life cannot ſupercede it. To the beloved names of Father, Wife, Child, or Nephew, that of FRIEND muſt alſo be added, to make the ſum of our ſocial bliſs compleat.

* Epheſtion accompanying Alexander to the tent of Darius, was by ſome of the captives miſtaken for Alexander: Apology being made for the miſplaced homage, the conqueror anſwered, *Indeed you were not deceived, for he alſo is Alexander.*

Philoſophy cannot over-rule our propenſity to it, or give us a ſubſtitute for it. SENECA, ſtoick as he was, could expatiate upon the bleſſings of FRIENDSHIP; lay himſelf open to the impreſſions, and ſeek his relief in the ſeveral offices of it: and CICERO and PLINY do to this day charm the world with what are no other than its pure and genuine effuſions.

The barbarous Scythian has felt its power as well as the poliſhed Greek; and with the uſual energy and ſpiritedneſs of LUCIAN is made to contend, not only for the *reality*, but for the *ſupremacy* of it too, in his own rude and uncivilized nation. The people, whoſe ſword or bow was their greateſt deity,

could yet pay divine honours to FRIENDSHIP: they invoked her as a GODDESS: they built to her a temple: they charged the duties of FRIENDSHIP upon their children at her ſacred ſhrine: and placed amongſt the GODS ſuch as had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by breathing the ſpirit and fulfiling the obligations of it.

FRIENDSHIP has always been the ſtrongeſt in the beſt minds, and has led to effects that are almoſt incredible. What ſelf-denial, what endurance of hardſhip, what fortitude in danger, what defiance of death, has not FRIENDSHIP produced? indeed it is next to FAITH—that ſublime principle ſo divinely celebrated in the ſcriptures: it is next to FAITH, for the contempt of the

world which it has inſpired—the ſuperiority to all partial and ſelfiſh attachments which it has created—for the arduous taſks that have been undertaken—and the benevolent ſacrifices that have been made under the influence of it.

It is the delight of ſanguine youth, and the prop of tottering age—without it proſperity has no bloom; and with it adverſity is no burthen. *A friend is born for adverſity*: the anxious heart expands at his approach, and the tear ceaſes at affliction's eye.

Next to the providence of GOD the boſom of a FRIEND is our aſylum, and his counſel our guide amidſt the dangers and difficulties of this expoſed and ſtruggling ſtate:

and therefore the wiſeſt of men, he who wrote *vanity of vanities—all is vanity*, upon every thing elſe in this world, charges a perſeverance in FRIENDSHIP upon us, as our readieſt and beſt reſource. *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forſake not* *.

SOLITARINESS has always been reckoned unnatural where it is affected, and an infelicity where it is forced. This made Adam's condition imperfect, and his very paradiſe defective in the eſtimation of GOD himſelf: he who ſaid of all his other works *that they were very good*; alſo declaring that *it was not good for man to be alone* †. With the joys of innocence—the pleaſures of intelligence—the plenty of Eden—the

* Prov. xxvii. 10. † Gen. ii. 18.

works

works and wonders of a ſtately and beautiful world to entertain his admiring eyes—and the condeſcending viſits of its bounteous Creator to his terreſtrial abode—his bleſſedneſs was ſaid to be unfiniſhed till he had a *companion*, a *partner*, and *ſharer* of all. And if ADAM wanted ſociety, notwithſtanding all the perfection with which he came out of his Maker's hands—and wanted it in that lovely garden where *the Lord God placed him*—and where he ſaw nothing but what invited to peace, reflection, and devotion—how much more muſt WE want it in this reduced ſtate of things? now that both the world and human nature have experienced ſo ſad a change—how neceſſary is FRIENDSHIP to us who have ſo many diſorders within us to diſturb our quiet, and ſo many

dangers

dangers without to deſtroy our ſecurity? who ſee the earth abound with diſappointments and diſtreſſes, and cannot help apprehending that we muſt have our portion of them! If the firſt man wanted it, who was happy in every thing elſe, how neceſſary muſt it be to us who are comparatively happy in nothing elſe?

Above all does it argue the ſuperior excellence of FRIENDSHIP, that it was the grand *ſolæmen* of THE SON OF GOD HIMSELF, when he dignified and bleſſed our world with his preſence. Senſual pleaſures he took no delight in—all the objects of covetouſneſs and ambition were infinitely beneath him—but the recreation of a rational and moral FRIENDSHIP—this he honoured our earth by accepting at its hands,

to

to the renunciation of every thing elſe it could offer him. *I have called you Friends**; (ſaid he to his diſciples.) His mind was perfect light—his will was exact rectitude—his affections were elevated and heavenly—his breaſt the ſeat of ſerenity and purity; and the Father was ſo conſtantly with him that he was *never alone*—and yet notwithſtanding all theſe divine eſſentials of bleſſedneſs within him, he diſdained not that gratification which virtuous FRIENDSHIP affords; he cultivated it with his twelve apoſtles in the moſt intimate manner; and in his laſt conferences with them, (when there was the ſpecial endearment of mutual affliction) there are ſuch delicate ſentiments and touches of FRIEND-

* John xv. 15.

SHIP,

SHIP diſcernible, as create at this diſtant day the moſt tender and pleaſing emotion; and exhibit the fineſt patern of a kind, a generous, and a ſympathizing heart.—Of the twelve apoſtles THREE * were allowed a greater familiarity with him than the reſt, and were admitted into his moſt retired privacies—and of theſe, ONE was eſpecially diſtinguiſhed, and has his name handed down to us with this divine encomium—*the diſciple whom Jeſus loved* †.

In the caſe of the beloved family at Bethany, let the tears of our ſenſibility and genuine feeling atteſt the FRIENDSHIP of the Redeemer's heart. To enlarge upon that in-

* Pete., James, and John. † John xiii. 23.

tereſting

tereſting tale would be only to enfeeble: thanks for that teacher and example of Philanthropy, who in the plenitude of his Maſter's ſpirit, has placed him before us at the grave of LAZARUS.*

From this ſhort view of the excellence and importance of FRIENDSHIP, who would not wiſh to experience it in its higheſt poſſible improvements, and (if the diſtance between heaven and earth ſhould be found not to forbid it) to cultivate it with nobler beings, and higher intelligences! — But IS FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD TO BE HAD?

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of FRIENDSHIP *with* GOD.

WILL GOD *in very deed dwell with men on the earth* *, was the exclamation of a mighty monarch—an exclamation not of *doubt*, but of *joyful amazement*—he had that juſt ſenſe of the tranſcendent greatneſs of the GOD of heaven, which annihilates all human diſtinctions—and had not as yet degenerated into thoſe low and paltry notions of Deity that prepared him for his mean and impious idolatries.

That divine condeſcenſion which is here exhibited for the delight and

* 2 Chron. vi. 18.

aſtoniſh-

aſtoniſhment of the world, is confirmed to us by the lips of our gracious Saviour: *If any man keep my words my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him* *. Agreeable to what is elſewhere ſaid by that very apoſtle who has recorded this wonderful declaration of his bleſſed maſter: *He that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son* †. He hath the favour, the good-will, of both. If theſe words do not import FRIENDSHIP, none can.

FRIENDSHIP amongſt men ariſes from ſome or all of theſe four things. 1. From our natural propenſity to ſociety and mutual con-

* John xiv. 23. † 2 Ep. John 9. ver.

verſe

verſe. Man is a ſociable creature, and his qualifications for ſociety ſhew that he was intended for it. 2. From the pleaſure of communicating our ſentiments and endearments to one another. Without an opportunity of doing this, the improvements of the underſtanding *, and the virtues of the heart, would yield but a diminiſhed ſatisfaction. 3. Our dependance upon one another is a farther riſe of FRIENDSHIP. It belongs to GOD alone to be independent, and to need nothing out of

* Si quis in cœlum aſcendiſſet, naturamque mundi, et pulchritudinem ſiderum perſpexiſſet, inſuavem illam admirationem ei fore, quæ jucundiſſima fuiſſet, ſi aliquem, cui narraret, habuiſſet. Sic natura ſolitarium nihil amat, ſemperque ad aliquod tanquam adminiculum annititur: quod in amiciſſimo quoque dulciſſimum eſt.

Cic. de Amicitia, § 23.

himſelf

himſelf for his own happineſs: he *communicates* his happineſs to his creatures, but cannot *increaſe* it.

4. Another ſource of FRIENDSHIP amongſt men, is the diſcovery of ſome amiable qualities in them; theſe catch the heart before we are aware, and carry it away into all the intereſts, delights, and pleaſures, of the beloved object: determining our propenſity to ſociety in general, to ſome ſpecial objects of peculiar delight.

Theſe are the ſecret bands that hold the civil world together, and the ordinary grounds of FRIENDSHIP amongſt men.

Now each of theſe has ſomething of a parallel in FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

THE

THE FRIEND OF GOD diſcerns his ſupreme and original excellencies—The pleaſure of mutual communication is maintained by goodneſs on GOD's part, and by devout affections on the part of his FRIEND. The ſenſe of his dependence upon GOD commands his reverence, and that dependence anſwered, inflames his gratitude; and his enlightened and rectified ſpirit affects divine converſe with an eaſe and nature, like that with which men affect and ſlide into each others converſes and friendſhips. *The upright love him.*

The nature and the ſeveral expreſſions of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, will be more particularly ſtated in a ſubſequent chapter of this Treatiſe; at preſent I may define it in theſe few words: "It is the reverent,

rent, adoring, grateful, and dutiful behaviour of man to GOD; and GOD's favour and complacency in and towards man; together with man's pleasing apprehension and persuasion of this.

I. And this was the original state of man—he was obedient, and GOD was friendly. Rebellion on the one part, and displeasure on the other, came in afterwards: and *were not from the beginning*. GOD made man for FRIENDSHIP with himself. *Let us make man*, said he, *in our own image* *! and why *in his own image*, but *for his own communion*? This mode of CONSULTATION at the production of man, and express mention of the divine patern after

* Gen. i. 26.

which

which he ſhould be formed, indicated the noble purpoſe and view of the Creator, in the exiſtence he was about to beſtow upon him. I will have a creature in the world my hand has juſt formed, that ſhall be a partaker of my intelligence, and capable of my converſe—that ſhall adore my perfections and bleſs me for my works—that ſhall lift up to me an admiring and grateful eye—and that ſhall receive my viſits and benefits with mental ſatisfaction and pleaſure. And while *man continued in honour* it was ſo: from heaven to Adam's paradiſe was a frequented road; and GOD and his new-formed creature met with mutual delight, till tranſgreſſion induced ſeparation, and that ſeparation induced miſery—the ſame offence that deprived man of GOD's company making him

moſt

moſt unhappy in his own. Man oppoſed forbidden appetite to wiſe and reaſonable law—there the quarrel began, which is to this day perpetuated in the ſame manner by all the impenitent and incorrigible part of his offspring.

But THIS FRIENDSHIP was as *mercifully reſtored* as it was *freely formed*.

GOD ſought the fugitive—he had fled from his duty, and his happineſs, and was endeavouring to fly from himſelf. *In the cool of the day* (the emblem of abated wrath *) he came to deal with his fallen creature, and tendered him a bleſſing (the comprehenſive bleſſing he had loſt) when he was vainly endea-

viv

* The pleaſing turn of Dr. Groſvenor.

vouring

vouring to hide himſelf from a curſe: and accoſted him with a promiſe, the developement and accompliſhment of which make up our goſpel, which is all comprized in the glad tidings *That* GOD *is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf* *. GOD preached this doctrine to Adam; and the everlaſting goſpel preaches it to his apoſtate children through their ſeveral generations. This leads me to another remark:

II. AS FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD was the primitive ſtate of man, ſo the reſtoration of that FRIENDSHIP is the grand deſign of the goſpel.

The goſpel invites us into this FRIENDSHIP--it ſolemnly charges

* 2 COR. v. 19.

it

it upon us—*Be ye reconciled unto* GOD *; assuring us that* GOD has done all that was neceſſary to be done by way of ſacrifice and ranſom for the making ſuch FRIENDSHIP real and permanent. *Be ye reconciled unto* GOD—FOR *he hath made him to be ſin for us who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of* GOD *in him* †. Now, ſays the apoſtle, "Let GOD's diſpoſition to FRIENDSHIP (herein wonderfully expreſſed) engage your's. If you really ſee the guilt and feel the infelicity of diſtance and enmity, let GOD's overtures for nearneſs and FRIENDSHIP, manifeſted by the gift of his Son for a Mediator, excite your deſire and encourage your hope thereof. By the goſpel we learn

* 2 Cor. v. 20. † Ibid. ver. 21.

that GOD ſent his Son into the world, and lifted him up upon a croſs, that he might *draw all men to himſelf*— that he might powerfully work upon the ingenuity and gratitude of his revolted progeny, and that after ſuch a diſplay of his heavenly benevolence, none might continue at a diſreſpectful and ruinous diſtance from him.

Let us value and honour the goſpel, for this its high and merciful deſign. It is that whereby GOD is *bringing home his baniſhed*—and *gathering together into one* happy body, *all his children that are ſcattered abroad.* It is that diſpenſation, whereby he is endeavouring to reclaim the prodigal, ſoften the obdurate, conciliate ſuch as are diſaffected to his government, and encourage

courage ſuch as are for returning to the diſcipline of it. It is the mean whereby GOD works for rooting out of his human creation all enmity to him and his laws, and in a proportionate degree, all miſery. So far as its doctrines have their proper influence, its propoſals accepted, and its ſpirit prevalent; man is reſtored to the honour and happineſs of his firſt eſtate, and the world is a paradiſe not entirely loſt. As it is the dignity of human nature that we are capable of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, ſo it is the excellency of Chriſtianity, when embraced, that it puts us into the poſſeſſion of it. Well may the goſpel be ſtyled a high calling—with a rational and commendable boaſting may we take up St. Paul's words—*Ye ſee your call-*

ing brethren * ! an honourable calling as well as an holy—caſting a luſtre upon our apoſtate world, brightening the obſcurity, and ennobling the meanneſs of any condition in it.

III. As it is the deſign of Chriſtianity to reſtore that FRIENDSHIP WITH DEITY, which was the glory of man's original ſtate — ſo ſuch FRIENDSHIP is deſcribed as actually reſtored, wherever Chriſtianity is cordially received. *As many as received him,* (i. e. Jeſus Chriſt) *to them* (ſays the evangeliſt) *he gave power to become the ſons of* GOD, *even to them that believed in his name* ‖. And in the relation of SONS OF GOD,

* 1 Cor. i. 26. ‖ 1 John, 12 ver.

the

the FRIENDSHIP OF GOD muſt be included. By eſcaping the pollutions that are in the world through luſts, in obedience to the authority, and in conformity to the ſpirit of the goſpel, we are ſaid to become *partakers of the divine nature* *—and if we have the NATURE OF GOD, we muſt have the FRIENDSHIP OF GOD—for GOD cannot but love his own image, and the perſons in whom it is found. By cultivating the temper of love, which is above all others the temper of the goſpel, we are ſaid *to dwell in* GOD, and *to have* GOD *dwelling in us* †: An expreſſion which imports FRIENDSHIP in the very higheſt degree. The apoſtle whoſe theſe words are, has elſewhere this wonderful expreſſion—

* 2 Pet. i. 4. † 1 John iv. 16.

Our fellowſhip is with the Father, as well as *with his Son Jeſus Chriſt* *. And to cloſe this article—if in obedience to the commands, and under the influence of the promiſes of the goſpel, *we come out from a prophane world, cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and perfect holineſs in the fear of* GOD, GOD *will receive us, and be a Father unto us, and we ſhall be ſons and daughters to the Lord Almighty: He will dwell in us and walk in us, and be to us a God, and we ſhall be to him a people* †. Is not this FRIENDSHIP?

* 1 John i. 3. † 2 Cor. vi. 16.

CHAP. III.

Of FRIENDSHIP *on* GOD's *part*;

OR,

That GOD *is a* FRIEND *to us.*

THIS is the voice of nature and ſcripture, the language of heaven and earth, and the uniform teſtimony of every creature — the moſt glorious and excellent GOD addreſſes us by each, and ſays—CALL ME FRIEND. This ſhould inſpire us with joy and confidence, and make the ſtrongeſt and grandeſt impreſſions upon our ſpirits.

CREATION aroſe from his boundleſs benignity, and is therefore one imperfect expreſſion of it. I know not what lovelier thought can enter the heart of man than is conveyed by the hymn of the celeſtials— *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created* *. It was the PLEASURE of GOD that his immenſe and boundleſs goodneſs ſhould iſſue in ſuch a creation as this. In his eternal and all comprehenſive mind he formed a fair and well furniſhed world — *calling things that were not as though they were*; and amongſt the reſt of the creatures with which it ſhould be

* Rev. iv. 11.

reple-

repleniſhed, deſigned one nobler than the others, who ſhould be capable of knowing who made both him and them — of contemplating the glorious excellencies of his Maker, and of partaking a felicity in him, as well as a being from him; with what a captivating ſpirit of benevolence is the great GOD deſcribed as planning this earth which we inhabit—*meaſuring the waters—meteing out the land* *—*and ſpreading his line upon it* †—the expreſſions denote both contrivance and complaceney, and according to the beauteous model which his goodneſs drew—up roſe the world at his Almighty FIAT. The lofty ISAIAH, magnifying the power and wiſdom of GOD in Creation, aſks, "Who being his coun-

* Iſaiah xl. 12. † Job xxxviii. 5.

ſellor has inſtructed him *," in this amazing work? I add, CREATION is all his own in point of BENEFICENCE, as well as wiſdom and power — all muſt be reſolved into *the good pleaſure of his goodneſs* †; all is *proprio motu*—unſolicited, unmerited, unrewarded goodneſs.

The creation of man eſpecially diſplays the benignity of GOD. It is diſplayed in his very frame. DAVID admired at his own ſtructure as an indication of divine goodneſs; and therefore commanding praiſe as well as wonder—*I will praiſe thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well, &c. How precious alſo are thy*

* Iſaiah xl. 13. † 2 Theſſ. i. 11.

thoughts

thoughts unto me, &c *. And JOB, with apparent reverence of himſelf, though a greater reverence of his Maker, prefaces his admiring contemplation of his own form and figure with this declaration—*Thy hands have made me and faſhioned me together round about* †. This is not barely an aſſeveration *thou haſt done it*—but it is a magnifying GOD's work:—"None but thou couldeſt have made ſo excellent a creature: and it is thy GOODNESS that thou haſt." And as the frame of man, ſo

The original diſpoſal of him ſhewed his Maker's FRIENDSHIP to him. *The Lord God planted a garden eaſtward in Eden: and there he put the man that he had*

* Pſalm cxxxix. 14, *&c.* † Job x. 8.

made.

made *. This conveys the notion of eſpecial fruitfulneſs, beauty, and uſe.—Of a ſpot, diſtinguiſhed firſt by the divine eye, and then by the divine culture and bounty—here is a kind of preparation on GOD's part, as it ſhould ſeem for the introduction of a favourite, and what muſt be man's admiration at himſelf, and confidence in his GOD, when walking forth in ſtrength and beauty, and with a portion of his Maker's intelligence and majeſty, his eye beheld and appropriated the charming ſcene? the inſpiration of the Almighty whiſpering within him—ALL THIS IS MADE FOR ME!

AFTER his tranſgreſſion GOD prolonged his LIFE, though he had

* Gen. ii. 8.

forfeited

forfeited THAT, as well as his paradiſe; and immediately began to ſhew mercy in a way ſuited to his ſunk and degraded condition. The firſt inſtance of ſuch mercy was his promiſe of a Saviour *. Another remarkable and engaging inſtance of it was his ſecuring, by expreſs law, the lives of mankind from the fury and wickedneſs of one another. How ſoon was diſobedience to heaven followed by every kind of outrage upon earth? How ſoon was the cry of violence heard in the tents of Adam's progeny?—they doing violence to each other, as he had already done violence, both to his GOD and to himſelf!—in this ſad ſtate GOD might have left them to be their own executioners, till the

* Gen. iii. 15.

race

race ſhould have become extinct by means of the ſame undiſciplined and exceſſive paſſions that firſt inſulted him. But inſtead of thus renouncing all care of a rebellious race of beings, he interpoſed with his poſitive law againſt murther, delivered in terms, the condeſcenſion and love of which are ſufficient to work upon the worſt of men.

At the hand of man—at the hand of every man's brother will I require the LIFE OF MAN. *Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed*; FOR IN THE IMAGE OF GOD MADE HE MAN *. This is truly intereſting—the very ground of this law was man's enmity to his own ſpecies, as well as to the author of

* Gen. ix. 5, 6.

it;

it; which manifeſted him to have now become a moſt depraved creature. Yet, ſays the benevolent Creator, I will acknowledge the NATURAL image of me that he yet bears, though he has loſt the MORAL; ſunk as he is, he is a Godlike creature ſtill—Godlike even in his ruins, and therefore ſhall not be touched with impunity. What is this but FRIENDSHIP—FRIENDSHIP to man, expreſſly conſidered as depraved and rebellious.

Of the ſame FRIENDLY nature with this expreſs and poſitive law, are thoſe ſtrong, though inviſible reſtraints, which GOD has laid upon the ſpirits of men, and by which they are uſually held under, and kept from injuring and deſtroying one another. There are impreſſions left

left upon the nature of man, which are called *the Laws of Nature*. St. Paul intimates, that for their ſtrength and clearneſs, they are ſufficient for us both to be governed and judged by: now theſe were all written upon our hearts by the finger of the great legiſlator; and as the tendency of them is to keep the world in peace and order, they muſt be acknowledged ſo many marks of his care and concern for his creature man; that his dwelling in this world may be made ſafe and ſecure unto him.

With theſe LAWS of GOD, his PROVIDENCE operates for the preſervation and happineſs of men; and hence his FRIENDLY diſpoſition towards them farther appears. The vaſt variety of creatures that fill this

this world continually, receive from his liberality—*the eyes of all wait upon him, and he ſatisfies the deſire of every living thing*: he underſtands the aſking look of each, and grants the expected ſupply. *Not a ſparrow is forgotten before God*: he feeds the inferior creatures that they may miniſter unto man—to his neceſſities, and to his entertainments; ſo that in the iſſue *all the tender mercies of God that are over all his works* do terminate in us, and we may ſay of every thing that pleaſes us, either for beauty or uſe, THAT IS MERCY TO ME—another effort of the Creator's kindneſs, to make my ſtay in this world agreeable and happy to me.

He continues our breath, and gives us our bread in a continual ſucceſſion from day to day. *He maketh*

maketh his ſun to ariſe on the evil and the good, and ſendeth his rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt—and all under the character of—OUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. He gives his benefits where he is not received with them, amongſt *the evil and unthankful*—they enter the doors that are ſhut againſt the divine benefactor—*they ſay unto God depart from us*—and yet *he fills their houſes with good things* *. Shew me the FRIEND beſides that will continue his bounty and be conſtantly overlooked.

Let us bring the matter home to ourſelves, and ſee if GOD is not a FRIEND to us.—What is it we eat—what is it we drink—what is it that clothes us, warms us, and delights us

* Job xxii. 17.

are

—are not all theſe the vouchſafements of our divine benefactor; that while we are candidates for a better world, we may not feel neceſſity in this?—There is nothing in our houſes—nothing in our poſſeſſion, but we may each of us write upon it—DONUM AMICI COELESTIS—*the gift of my great and heavenly* FRIEND, *who indeed giveth all things richly to enjoy*: one of whoſe titles is FATHER OF LIGHTS, and *Author of every good gift, and every perfect gift to the children of men.* He gives all with the pureſt benignity of intention—not to enſnare us, but to bleſs us to the utmoſt; when it happens otherwiſe, the cauſe and the blame are in ourſelves; we put a ſting to the honey of his bleſſings, and a thorn to the roſe of thoſe delights which he ſends us. And GOD

gives

gives with pleaſure to himſelf as well as with pure benignity to us—and this evinces FRIENDSHIP to us to the higheſt degree; how incomparably captivating is the ſentiment conveyed in the following line—*Thou art good and doeſt good* *. Thou doeſt good of thine own will and pleaſure, and becauſe it is thy very nature. This (as I ſaid before) is called—*the good pleaſure of his goodneſs* †; a complacency in the ſeveral exertions of it, both as previouſly deſigned and as actually conferred—*thou art good and doeſt good.*

His FRIENDLY counſels guide us—his FRIENDLY bounty ſupplies us—his FRIENDLY rebukes awaken and correct us—*as many as I love, I re-*

* Pſalm cxix. 68. † 2 Theſſ. i. 11.

buke

buke and chaſten *—it is his FRIENDLY viſitation that preſerves our ſpirits—it is his preſence and power that keeps us from danger, or delivers us out of it. He is *with us in ſix troubles and in ſeven*—he carries us through all our uncertainties—is better to us than our fears—and is *a rock higher than we are when our hearts are overwhelmed within us. Able to do for us exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we can aſk or think.* In ſickneſs he is near us—in death he is with us; he delivers us from both, or cauſes that neither ſhall do us any harm.

When death has even began to triumph in his ſpoil, and ſet up his pale ſtandard upon the out-works,

* Rev. iii. 19.

in

in token that he had ſo far carried the place—when the blood has forſaken our cheeks, and been retreating to our hearts—how often has our divine FRIEND ſtepped in to our relief—and as the almighty PRESERVER OF MEN ſtopped the conflict and the agony, reſtored the dying pulſe, braced the trembling nerve, reddened the white and quivering lip, and diſplayed afreſh the enſigns of life; ſo that we inſtantly found ourſelves *the living—the living to praiſe him*; and have perhaps, ſince then, been enabled, through his mercy, to look down with pleaſure into that very grave that we once thought ſo frightful and terrifying.

And in the whole interim between ſuch our temporary deliverance from death, and our finally ſubmitting to the

the ſtroke of it, we have the FRIENDLY PROMISES of GOD to ſweeten life, and to enſure the ſafety of it unto us. Theſe are the ſtaff in our hands—the cordial to our hearts—the ſtay of our ſpirits in a fainting hour—our conſtant food and real treaſure.—*I will never leave thee nor forſake thee* *.—*To your old age, and hoary hairs will I carry you* †.—*I am thy ſhield and thine exceeding great reward* ‡.—*Becauſe he hath ſet his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will ſet him on high becauſe he hath known my name. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him* ‖.

But what ſhall we ſay to it, when beſides his protection, his counſels,

* Heb. xiii. 5. † Iſaiah xlvi. 4. ‡ Gen. xv. 1. ‖ Pſalm xci. 14, &c.

his

his promiſes, and his various bounties, we recollect that he has given us HIS VERY SELF in the perſon of his divine and bleſſed Son!—Is not this FRIENDSHIP—both in the moſt unqueſtionable reality, and in the higheſt degree of it?——One of the poets hath an ingenious fancy to expreſs the paſſion wherewith he found himſelf overcome, after a long reſiſtance. "That the GOD of Love "had ſhot all his golden arrows at "him, but could never pierce his "heart; till at laſt he put himſelf "into the bow, and darted himſelf "ſtrait into his breaſt. This doth "ſome way adumbrate GOD's deal-"ings with men; he had long con-"tended with a ſtubborn world, "and thrown down many a bleſſing "upon mortals; and when all his "other gifts could not prevail, he

"at

" at laſt made a gift of himſelf, to " teſtify his affection and engage " theirs *." GOD SO *loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life* †. Herein IS LOVE—no falſe pretence, no fictitious counterfeit, but the true ſubſtance, the ſuperlative degree of it—*that* GOD *ſent his Son to be a propitiation for us* ‡.

And this gift of his Son is a permanent gift—permanent in reſpect of its benefit and uſe. Though he was offered *once for all*—it was not for one age or nation only. On account of his moſt precious oblation, made more than ſeventeen hundred years ago, I may ſay to each of you

* Scougal's Life of God. † John iii. 16.
‡ 1 John iv. 10.

as Chriſt to the publican—*This day is ſalvation come to thine houſe* *—and how excellent is this ſalvation in its nature—how free in its offers—how reaſonable in its conditions? Yea, how reaſonable has GOD always been in his requirements from men, under diſpenſations prior to the goſpel; what a merciful acceptance of them has he teſtified amidſt all their imperfections—and what a readineſs to recompence any thing good in the meaneſt and guiltieſt of his creatures! *If thou doeſt well ſhalt thou not be accepted* †? was his language to a very CAIN. Is not this the language of FRIENDSHIP to ſinners; ſufficient to remove the burthen of paſt guilt, and

* Luke xix. 9. † Gen. iv. 7.

to

to inſpire with reſolution and courage for better endeavours?

But to put this matter out of all poſſible doubt, viz. GOD's diſpoſition to FRIENDSHIP with man—be it remembered that GOD has always had his FRIENDS in our world—ENOCH, the ſeventh from ADAM, *walked with* GOD *; which imports, together with his piety towards GOD, GOD's FRIENDSHIP and favour to him.

AS to ABRAHAM, GOD is repreſented as coming to his houſe, communing with him, and imparting to him the awful and majeſtic deſigns of his providence; So he communicated his deſolating judgments

* Gen. v. 24.

upon the wicked cities—the temporary HELL that he was about to kindle upon EARTH; thereby manifesting the most engaging condescension and confidence on his part, and affording to ABRAHAM an opportunity of addressing him in one of the finest forms of intercession that is any where to be met with; and which, for the proportionate honours it does, to the purity, mercy, and grandeur of GOD, may be held forth to imitation for ever.

When the fiery vengeance was ready to descend, GOD notified it to LOT by an embassy of angels; who with a FRIENDLY violence drew him from his dwelling, and hastened him beyond the limits of the accursed plain; assigning as the cause, that (impatient as destruction was of receiving

ceiving her commiſſion) *they could do nothing till he was departed* *. So did one juſt perſon ſuſpend the judgments of incenſed heaven: rather than one FRIEND OF GOD ſhould be deſtroyed, the cities of his adverſaries have an undeſerved reſpite.

What a teſtimony does GOD bear to JOB, and in what wonderful terms acknowledge him for a FRIEND! aſſerting and vindicating the excellence of his character before men and devils—*Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant Job, that there is none like him upon the earth, a perfect man and an upright, one that feareth God and eſcheweth evil* †? *Go to my ſervant Job—and my ſervant Job ſhall pray for you, for him will I accept: leaſt*

* Gen. xix. 22. † Job i. 8.

I deal with you after your folly *. What an ACCEPTABLENESS of this man to GOD is here indicated!

With MOSES, GOD is ſaid to have ſpoken *as a man ſpeaketh to his* FRIEND †.

DANIEL had an angel ſent to him to aſſure him of his being dear to heaven—*O Daniel, a man greatly beloved* ‡—was the honourable mode of ſalutation.

And to ſhew his high eſtimation of NOAH and SAMUEL, as well as of JOB, MOSES and DANIEL; the Almighty thus declares—*As I live* (a ſolemn preface never uſed but upon grand and awful occaſions)

* Job xlii. 7. † Ex. xxxiii. 2.
‡ Dan. x. 11.

though

though MOSES *and* SAMUEL *ſtood before me, my mind could not be towards this people* *.—*Though theſe three men* NOAH, DANIEL, *and* JOB *were in the land, they ſhould deliver only their own ſouls* †. GOD had bid MOSES *let him alone* that he might deſtroy the idolatrous Iſraelites—THE MAN OF GOD prayed and interceded, and prevented the ruin ‡. SAMUEL *prayed and ſacrificed, and the* LORD *thundered upon the Philiſtines and diſcomfited them* §. But now, their prayers are denyed this power and prevalence—*though* MOSES *and* SAMUEL *ſtood before me—though theſe three men,* NOAH, DANIEL *and* JOB *were in the land, their righteouſneſs ſhould deliver only their own ſouls.* How could the piety of theſe men

* Jer. xv. 1. † Ezek. xvi. 24.
‡ Ex. xxxii. 9. § 1 Sam. vii. 9.

and their intereſt with GOD on the one hand, as well as JUDAH's unpardonable wickedneſs on the other, have been ſet forth in more expreſſive words.

And now, what is the inference from all this—what, but that as *the heaven* does not confine GOD in *his* FRIENDSHIPS—the earth ſhould not confine *us* in *ours*. And ſince heaven is deſcribed as the place of his moſt glorious reſidence, we ſhould betake ourſelves thither, with our affectionate praiſes, our profeſſions of dependence, our truſt, complacency, and all thoſe other virtuous ſentiments and habits, which are included in FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD on our part, and the more particular deſcription of which will be the buſineſs of the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of FRIENDSHIP *on our part*;

OR,

What makes us FRIENDS *of* GOD.

SECT. I.

Of RECONCILIATION *to* GOD *as the Foundation of* FRIENDSHIP *with him.*

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ſuppoſes RECONCILIATION. Reconciliation to GOD, his perfections and government.

This reconciliation amongſt the FRIENDS of GOD, implies that there is ſuch a thing as ENMITY to

him in others. And ſo there is: unnatural and heinous as it appears to us at the firſt mention. Our SAVIOUR charged it upon the Jews. *They have both ſeen and hated both me and my Father* *. And St. PAUL charged it upon the Gentiles. In his black catalogue of offenders he has theſe, *Haters of God* †.

A moſt dreadful charge is this: it is one which all apprehenſive perſons ſhould be deſirous of purging themſelves from: upon hearing that there are ſuch monſters of impiety in the world, we ſhould enquire with the intereſtedneſs of the apoſtles on another occaſion. Lord are we amongſt them? *Is it I?*

* John xv. 20. † Rom. i. 30.

THE

THE ATHEIST would deſtroy the exiſtence of GOD: and this is the very height of enmity: of enmity not to GOD only but to men too. Whom he would by this means rob of all heavenly protection, and of the only ſure ground of joy, truſt and hope. And this enmity of the atheiſt both to GOD and men appears the more unpardonable and deteſtable, when it is conſidered for what purpoſe it is conceived and maintained, viz. that he (the atheiſt) may enjoy his own guilty ſecurity—that he may live with the ſenſuality of a brute, or the malignity of a devil, and then die in deſpair, and have no one to call him to an account. For this worthy end, the world muſt be without a ruler, and man without a GOD. GOD muſt loſe his throne, that ſuch

a mean

a mean wretch may break the orders of it; and the virtuous part of the creation muſt loſe its heaven, that he may eſcape his own deſerved hell. What is this but the moſt provoking enmity firſt againſt GOD, and then againſt the beſt intereſt, the natural hope, and the true honour of mankind. And in what a pitiful and ſordid SELFISHNESS is this enmity founded. GOD and man, heaven and earth, muſt all give way, that a child of pride or oppreſſion, of vanity or profaneneſs, may have his own will and courſe; and be free from all wiſe, reaſonable and merciful reſtraint. The atheiſt is an enemy to his own ſtock and race, as well as to his Maker; and the oppoſing of his miſchievous and debaſing tenets, ſhould therefore be made a common intereſt and cauſe. *The fool hath*

ſaid

ſaid in his heart there is no God *. He is to be oppoſed on a double account—both as a fool and an adverſary.

But enmity to GOD is not to be confined to the atheiſt and the blaſphemer: there is no occaſion to deny GOD, burn the bible, and do an outrage to all that is ſacred, to become his enemy. The imputation falls upon other characters, the ſounds of which do not ſhock and alarm the mind in an equal manner.

There is THE LIBERTINE: this man would take the SCEPTRE out of GOD's hand and controul his natural and juſt authority, whenever

* Pſ. xiv. 1.

any

any fooliſh or wicked luſt claims to be gratified.

THE REVENGEFUL MAN would take the SWORD out of the hand of GOD, as the libertine would the ſceptre: he would invade the tremendous prerogative which GOD Almighty excluſively claims—*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord* *. So far as his own intereſts go, he would be ruler, judge and executioner: to the neglect and dethroning of the ſupreme ruler—the proceſſes of whoſe government, his paſſion, his humour, or his HONOUR wont let him ſtay for.

The life of every diſobedient perſon is a continual RESISTANCE to

* Rom. xii. 19.

the

the laws and commands of GOD. And what is RESISTANCE but ENMITY? A kind of enmity that is ſeverely threatened and condemned —*Woe be to him that ſtriveth with his Maker* *.

Among the ENEMIES of GOD I reckon the HARD HEARTED MAN —who never knew what is was to do good to men for GOD's ſake: though often entreated by that very conſideration. *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how ſhall he love* GOD *whom he hath not ſeen* †? With ſuch a perſon all goes into the whirlpool of ſelfiſhneſs: nothing paſſes his hands, by way of gratitude to GOD, or charity to men.

* Iſaiah xlv. 9. † 1 John iv. 20.

THE

THE COVETOUS man's name is followed with a dreadful appendage: *The covetous—whom the Lord abhors* *. Such declared enmity on GOD's part muſt infer a previous enmity on his. St. PAUL proclaims every covetous perſon an IDOLATER †; and what is ſuch idolatry but enmity: it is giving GOD's glory to another; and transferring to gold, that reverence, dependence and truſt, which are due only to infinite power, perfection and goodneſs. *They ſay unto gold thou art my hope, and to the fine gold thou art my confidence.* This FRIENDSHIP *with the world* is *enmity with God.* And GOD's enmity is denounced in return.

* Pſ. x. 3. † Eph. v. 5.

Beſides

Beſides that covetous men have continual infelicity in their unworthy appetitions and miſplaced affections, they have GOD's curſe. They experience their conduct to be irrational and UNHAPPY, by their manifold vexations and diſappointments: and, (what they too little think of) a divine NEMESIS purſues it as CRIMINAL. This is the recompence they have for their thorny cares and piercing ſorrows. *Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and his heart departeth from the Lord* *.

And what are all UNTHANKFUL and UNGRATEFUL MEN but enemies of GOD? St. PAUL ranks theſe alſo with the very worſt of ſinners.

* Jer. xvii. 5.

Unthank-

Unthankful, ungrateful *. Their alienation from GOD increaſes with the number and value of his favours. They fancy themſelves independent; (though in fact nothing is their own: *Lo, their good is not in their own hand* †,) and they immediately become inſolent. *We are Lords*, (they cry) *we will come no more unto thee* ‡. Let mean people worſhip GOD—we are above it. Thus are GOD's benefits and bleſſings perverted from their proper and intended uſe. GOD means to allure men by them to his intereſt and ſervice, and men take occaſion from them to deſert his intereſt and ſervice. He means them as ſo many motives to obedience, and they diſobey with the higher hand.

* 2 Tim. iii. 2. † Job xxi. 16.
‡ Jer. ii. 31.

And

And what ſhall we ſay of THE SONS OF PLEASURE and diſſipation? Theſe are accounted harmleſs characters—*No ones enemies but their own.* But the ſcripture impleads theſe as the enemies of GOD too: as their pleaſures have that ſupreme affection which is due to GOD alone. *Lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of* GOD *. And can this preference conſiſt with loyalty? PLEASURE is their grand and darling object, and every obligation of duty to GOD, every demand of devotion and piety that comes in the way thereof, is readily diſpenſed with. Are not theſe men GOD's enemies as well as their own?

* 2 Tim. iii. 4.

Beſides

Beſides theſe, there are THE PROUD *whom* GOD *knoweth afar off* *—THE LYING LIPS *that ſhall be put to ſilence* †—THE FALSE BALLANCES and them that hold them, *which are an abomination unto the* LORD ‡—and THE UNRIGHTEOUS *that ſhall not inherit his kingdom* §.

But why do I inſtance in particular claſſes of offenders? ALL SIN is ENMITY to GOD, and every ſinner is an enemy—ſo St. PAUL ſtates the matter—*Enemies in your minds to* GOD (ſays he) *by wicked works* ‖. And GOD is on his part an enemy to ſinners. *Angry with the wicked every day* ¶. A permanent anger—

* Pſ. cxxxviii. 6. † Pſ. xxxi. 18. ‡ Prov. xi. 1. § 1 Cor. vi. 9. ‖ Col. i. 21. ¶ Pſ. xii. 2.

ſtyled

ſtyled *The wrath of* GOD *abiding on them* *.

There is no one perfection in GOD, however excellent and admirable, but theſe men are ſome way or other enemies to: they would diſarm him of his POWER, becauſe they know they have incenſed it againſt them, and that it is too hard for them. They hate the UNLIMITED PRESENCE of GOD, which is the conſolation and triumph of the righteous, becauſe it follows them into the ſecret receſſes of their iniquities: they cannot endure his HOLINESS, though it is the ground of confidence in his government, becauſe it is contrary to, and will condemn their unholineſs—and as to his VERY GOOD-

* John iii. 36.

NESS, which they have ſo much occaſion for, and which they ſometimes profeſs to confide in, they are deſcribed as treating that with contempt, as well as neglect—it is ſo cheap and common that they make light of it, to their Maker's diſpleaſure, and their own aggravated ruin—*They deſpiſe the riches of his forbearance and patience; thus treaſuring up to themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath* *. Thus much for the reality of there being enemies to GOD in the world, and the perſons who fall under this unnatural and dreadful denomination. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ſuppoſes RECONCILIATION to him as its foundation; reconciliation to his exiſtence, perfections, and government; ſo that we have nothing to

* Rom. ii. 4.

object

object to either, but are perfectly well pleaſed that there is a GOD, and that he is ſuch a GOD as his word deſcribes him.

In order to ſuch reconciliation we muſt have the following notions of enmity to him:

That it is UNREASONABLE. This conſtitutes the guilt and torment of hell itſelf. You cannot ſay a more characteriſtical thing of the devil, than that he bears an enmity to GOD. This made him a devil at firſt, and ſtill keeps him ſuch—let not the children of men, partakers of GOD's image and ſharers of his bounty, reſemble this ancient enemy of GOD, and of all righteouſneſs. Moreover we muſt be aware that enmity to GOD is

DES-

DESTRUCTIVE ENMITY. OUR enmity will provoke HIS; and then our ruin is compleated. *Who can ſtand before his indignation and who can abide in the fierceneſs of his anger*? Who will ſet thorns and briars before me in battle?* (ſays he in the lofty ſpirit of deity) *I would go through them, I would burn them together†.* Our Saviour reminds us as an argument for living in the fear and FRIENDSHIP of GOD, *that he can deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell‡.* Thereby intimating that he will do ſo if he be not reverenced and loved as he ought to be. And when once we have incenſed him againſt us, conſider what an enemy he is capable of proving. HIS WISDOM will

* Nahum i. 6. † Iſaiah xxvii. 4.
‡ Matt. x. 28.

diſcover

diſcover and deſpiſe all our folly.—His POWER has thunderbolts always at hand, wherewith to revenge our impotent inſults—his very GOODNESS will condemn us for the abuſe of it—his TRUTH will accompliſh all his threatnings—his EYE will find us out wherever we go—and to conclude the melancholy detail, his ETERNITY will be the date of our miſery. A man is angry with me, and he dies—but *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living* GOD*. Laſtly, That we may be in full reconciliation with GOD—ſuch reconciliation as is the ground and beginning of friendſhip—let us attend to the ſeveral AGGRAVATIONS with which enmity to him is accompanied. To be an enemy to GOD

* Heb. x. 31.

is to hate the light, and love darkneſs rather (for GOD is the *Father of lights*)—it is to loath beauty, diſreliſh harmony—to fly in the face of goodneſs and patience, and to be averſe to perfection itſelf:—It is to ſtrike at that power through which we live and move, and to lift our hand and direct our breath againſt him who continues our capacity for uſing both.

At a ſtate and habit of mind like this, the man diſpoſed to FRIENDSHIP with GOD will be alarmed—will begin to look about him, and to enquire, *what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* how ſhall I keep clear, or get rid of that monſtrous and deſtructive thing, enmity to GOD? will ſeek after a rectified will, an enlightened mind, and holy and

loyal affections; will chooſe GOD as his ſupreme good; the book of GOD as his beſt guide; and the ſervice of GOD as his beſt employment; *with full purpoſe of heart, cleaving unto the Lord*—and expreſſing his full reconciliation to GOD, his providence, government, laws, and ſervice, in ſome ſuch language as this—*thou art my portion, O God! I have ſaid that I will keep thy words* *. *O how love I thy law; it is my continual meditation* †. *How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte; yea, ſweeter than honey to my mouth* ‡. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing which it hath for thy judgments at all times* ‖. *I eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every falſe way* §.

* Pſa. cxix. 57. † Ver. 97. ‡ Ver. 103. ‖ Ver. 20. § Ver. 128.

SECT. II.

Some other articles which conſtitute FRIENDSHIP *with* GOD *on our part—or by which we approve ourſelves* FRIENDS *of* GOD, *viz.*

KNOWLEDGE; CHOICE; DELIGHT.

I. KNOWLEDGE. This is the foundation of all valuable human FRIENDSHIPS.—They that we make FRIENDS of, are ſuch as we know, or think we know, to be excellent and amiable, and to be poſſeſſed of qualities that entitle them to our eſteem, love, and con-

confidence. And ſo it ſhould be with us and the great GOD.—We ſhould KNOW him, in order to our being the faſter and more faithful FRIENDS of him. And it is our unſpeakable happineſs in the preſent caſe, that the more clear and thorough our knowledge of GOD is, the more we ſhall ſee of the deſirableneſs of his FRIENDSHIP, and the more we ſhall applaud ourſelves for coveting it—*they that know thy name will put their truſt in thee**. The more entire our knowledge is of the beſt human characters, the more reaſon ſhall we ſee for charitable allowances, and for a limited confidence; but the more we are acquainted with divine perfection and

* Pſalm ix. 10.

goodneſs, the more ſhall we be ſatisfied with the ground of our dependence and hope—and, like David, ſhall charge it upon ourſelves with ſtill greater complacency and ſolemnity—*My ſoul, wait thou only upon God* *.

The knowledge of GOD will truly enrich us. How muſt that boſom be ennobled and adorned that is ſtored with ſuitable ideas of infinite power, goodneſs, wiſdom, and faithfulneſs? This knowledge is the true treaſure of the immortal mind—*this is life eternal* (ſays Jeſus Chriſt himſelf) *to know thee the only true God* †. This is the knowledge that GOD allows the creature to glory and triumph

* Pſalm lxii. 5. † John xvii. 3.

in

in. *Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me**,—the attributes of my nature, and the methods of my government.

The knowledge of GOD is, or ſhould be, natural to man. — We are his offſpring—and whom ſhould we be ſo deſirous of knowing as our great and heavenly parent? *Shew us the great father of all* (ſhould we ſay). Man, while unaſſiſted by divine revelation, ſhould call upon every creature to aid him in diſcovering the common eternal origin of himſelf and them.

Accordingly, Ignorance of GOD is branded, as in all caſes, *ſhameful:*

* Jer. ix. 23, 24.

*I ſpeak this to your ſhame** (ſays St. Paul) and (in that it is generally choſen and affected) as *monſtrous* and *unnatural*:—*they liked not to retain God in their knowledge*†, (ſays the apoſtle of the heathen world;) *of this they are willingly ignorant*‡ (ſays Peter of ſome libertine ſcoffers in his time.) Of this!—of what?—why of GOD, as the creator of the world, and the creator of themſelves. Some men will admit any abſurdities, rather than admit GOD into their knowledge. This world ſhall be ſuppoſed to be made by chance, or to be eternal, and ſo not made at all, rather than GOD be owned for the architect: there ſhall be no providence, rather than he ſhall have

* 1 Corinth. xv. 24. † Romans i. 28.
‡ 2 Pet. iii. 5.

the

the direction of it; and no future rewards and punishments, that he may be shut out from the distribution of them; and they will bear any burthens rather than seek after GOD as their deliverer—like those in the book of JOB, whose affected ignorance, and wilful neglect of GOD, is thus described:—*they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty, yet none saith, where is God my maker*†? Though nature itself would dictate, *cry to him to give thee* HELP *who gave thee thy* LIFE; yet they had rather perish in their stupidity and misery, than so far acknowledge their maker's being, power, and providence, as to implore his help. This chosen ignorance of GOD is the most debasing guilt of humanity—the most

† Job xxxv. 9, 10.

notorious violation of the law and duty of our creation.

FRIENDSHIP with GOD ſuppoſes that we are WILLING to know GOD—that we TAKE PAINS to know him—*Seeking after him, if haply we may find him**, *following on to know the Lord* †, (as the prophet ſpeaks) how excellent he is in himſelf, how related he is to us, and how ſuitable a portion for us—and that to our endeavours we add our PRAYERS to *the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the father of glory, that he would grant unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding in the knowledge of himſelf* ‡.

The FRIEND of GOD *has* the knowledge of GOD. Knowledge is

* Acts xvii. 27. † Hoſea vi. 3.
‡ Eph. i. 17.

one

one of the characteriſtics of the new, or heaven-born creature. They that are renewed after the image of GOD, are *renewed in knowledge*: as in the knowledge of truth in general, ſo eſpecially of the GOD, the *author* and the *fountain* of truth. The FRIEND of GOD uſes heaven and earth, and every creature in both, as ſo many mediums for attaining to the ſight of the bleſſed creator.—

" To him there is a tranſparency in
" every thing, through which the
" artificer ſhines. To him the works
" of GOD are ſo many WINDOWS for
" letting into his mind the moſt
" captivating beams of the divine
" perfections, while the ſenſual or
" the inconſiderate ſinner uſes them
" as ſo many CURTAINS for ſhut-
" ting GOD and his perfections out †."

† Mr. Mead.

The

The frame and furniture of the earth, the curious ornament of the heaven (termed *the work of his fingers**,) the wide and ſwelling ſea, all exhibit GOD to the admiring eye of his FRIEND: the awakening interpoſitions of providence in dreadful and deſerved judgments, are to him ſo many proclamations of the awful majeſty and purity of GOD: and the general forbearance and benignity of that providence, do, in *the ſmall ſtill voice* of ſweet and forcible perſuaſion, call him to more eſtabliſhed habits of gratitude, love, and truſt: the graſing beaſt, and chirping bird, bring to his remembrance that bountiful Lord, *who gives to the beaſt his food, and to the young ravens that cry*†. The painted flower ſhews

* Pſ. viii. 3. † Pſ. cxlvii. 9.

him

him the heavenly wiſdom that decked it, and is endeared to him for its maker's ſake, as well as for its own. Thus to THE FRIEND OF GOD, every thing is full of GOD.

Thus GOD in every creature ſhines,
Fair is the book of nature's lines,
But fairer is the book of grace.

Which leads me to obſerve, that it is from the word of GOD that the FRIEND OF GOD derives the fulleſt and moſt delectable knowledge of him. From thence he forms ſuch ideas of his almighty power, tranſcendent mercy, tender compaſſions, and long-ſuffering patience, as create a very heaven in his breaſt, in point of tranquility, confidence, and delight, and give him freſh ſpirits for active and chearful obedience.

After

After the knowledge of GOD let us, as we would approve ourſelves the FRIENDS OF GOD, be ambitious. Let us covet it both for our credit and our comfort. *Have I been ſo long time with thee* (ſaid Jeſus Chriſt to a diſciple) *and yet haſt thou not known me* ?* So may almighty GOD aſk us, have I been ſo long with you, never far from you, by the diſplays of my power and holineſs, by my wonderful works, and my tender mercies, and yet you will not know or acknowledge me ? If we are the ſincere FRIENDS OF GOD, we ſhall dread this imputation and charge.

II. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD includes CHOICE; the choice of him as our beſt hope, portion, and happineſs.

* John xiv. ix.

This

This is the very idea of FRIENDSHIP, viz. the chooſing ſome perſons from amongſt the reſt as the objects of our ſpecial eſteem, complacency, and truſt. — FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD is our CHOICE of HIM above every creature, and in the room of every creature; according to that rapturous exclamation, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſide thee**.

The great and adorable GOD OFFERS himſelf to our choice: *Chooſe you this day whom you will ſerve, love, and truſt* †, me, or vanity. He CLAIMS our choice: *My ſon give me thine heart* ‡. He EXPOSTULATES with us as to whom we would chooſe

* Pſ. lxxiii. 25. † Joſh. xxiv. 15.
‡ Prov. xxiii. 26.

to the refuſal of him, or ſet in competition and compariſon with him—*to whom will ye liken* GOD, *and with what ſimilitude will ye compare him* ?* And he LAMENTS every fooliſh and perverted choice that we make to the neglect of him; and the diſappointment and miſery that we thereby entail upon ourſelves: *My people would have none of me†: My people have forſaken the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out unto themſelves broken ciſterns that can hold no water‡.*

GOD is WORTHY to be CHOSEN by us as our beſt FRIEND and ſupreme good; for he is the infinite ALL IN ALL. *I am the almighty* GOD §.

* Iſa. xl. 18. † Pſ. lxxxi. 11.
‡ Jer. ii. 13. § Gen. xvii. 1.

(ſaid

(ſaid he to his FRIEND ABRAHAM.) As GOD here ſpeaks OF himſelf, ſo alſo LIKE himſelf, with a divine greatneſs and majeſty. His perfection contains all that we can imagine, and more than we can imagine—all knowledge, all goodneſs, and all happineſs—all that is deſirable of whatever kind, and in the higheſt poſſible degree. All other objects of our choice are inadequate to our neceſſities—but *how unlike them is the portion of Jacob* ?*

And as GOD is the WORTHY, ſo he is the ONLY SUITABLE object of our choice: and therefore, if we chooſe him not, we do an injury both to him and ourſelves: we rob him of his GLORY, and ourſelves of

* Jer. x. 16.

our

our SECURITY and COMFORT. And how abſurd is this method of conduct? how may a man lament his own condition, when it is duly apprehended by him—there is but one perfect being, but one ſatisfying good, but one ſuitable all-ſufficient FRIEND of mankind, and I make no choice of him, and therefore have no portion in him! From the *worth* and *ſuitableneſs of the object*, and alſo *from the neceſſity of the caſe*, the FRIEND OF GOD makes that choice of him which I have been ſpeaking of—*the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup* *. *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord* †. *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I ſaid, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living* ‡.

* Pſ. xvi. 5. † Ver. 2. ‡ Pſ. cxlii. 5.

And

And as the FRIENDS OF GOD make a choice of him as their preſent and final portion, ſo we find them expreſsly glorying in their choice, and exhibiting the worthy object of it to the admiration and love of mankind.—*Lo! this is our* GOD; *we have waited for him, and he will ſave us**. THIS GOD *is our God for ever and ever*†. THIS GOD! ſee how great and excellent he is, and how happy and ſafe we are in him! *Our God is in the heavens—he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed*‡. (Spoken by way of triumph over the falſe gods of the heathens)—*their idols are ſilver and gold, the work of mens hands.*

* Iſa. xxv. 9. † Pſalm xlviii. 14.
‡ Pſalm cxv. 3, 4.

Such

Such a CHOICE of GOD as our beſt FRIEND and ſovereign good let us make. We may do it in a more ſolemn and expreſs manner by prayers, vows, and ſacraments; or in a manner leſs expreſs, though more habitual, viz. by our prevalent eſteem of him, ſuperlative love, unfeigned devotedneſs, and ſubjection.

This CHOICE is juſtified by the COMMANDS of ſcripture, which enjoin our cleaving to GOD, and not to vanity. It is juſtified by the REPRESENTATIONS which the ſcriptures make of GOD—*With thee is the fountain of life*. In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy†.*

* Pſ. xxxvi. 9. † Pſ. xvi. 11.

By

By the CONGRATULATIONS of ſcripture—*Happy is he that hath the* GOD *of Jacob for his help, whoſe hope the Lord is**. And by the EXPERIENCE of the ſaints—*O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good—bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him*†.

Let us then *take with us words, and turn unto the Lord,*—let us repent of every unworthy, and eſpecially of every wicked choice we may have made againſt him, or in preference to him; adopting that moſt ſuitable language of the penitents in ISAIAH—*O Lord, our Lord, other Lords beſides thee have had dominion over us*—Dominion over our underſtandings, our affections, and our purſuits—*But by thee only will we now*

* Pſ. cxlvi. 5. † Pſ. xxxiv. 8.

make

make mention of thy name *. *What wait we for* from other confidences? Our hearts are upon thee—*our hope is in thee* ‡.

III. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ſuppoſes DELIGHT in him.

And for this there is abundant room, ſo far as power, perfection, and goodneſs can pleaſe. GOD is worthy of being delighted in, which every mortal FRIEND is not. There may be ſhining qualities to excite admiration, and a good heart to command our eſteem and confidence; and yet what is neceſſary to produce DELIGHT may be wanting. But GOD is an object every way DELECTABLE, and they that know his

* Iſa. xxvi. 13. ‡ Pſ. xxxix. 7.

name

name ſhall be made *to drink of the river of his pleaſure* ‡.

Delight in GOD is the temper and happineſs of heaven.—There all is joy and complacency—all is truſt and triumph; and in this valuable article heaven may be brought down to earth.

We are ALLOWED to delight in GOD; in his PERFECTIONS as our ENTERTAINMENT; and in his GOVERNMENT as our CONFIDENCE.

We are COMMANDED to delight in him. *Delight thyſelf in the Almighty, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine heart* †. It is ſo much GOD's will we ſhould do this, that he will grant us all we can aſk for

‡ Pſ. xxxvi. 8. † Pſ. xxxvii, 4.

it.

it. What a bribing of us to our own happineſs!

DELIGHT IN GOD diſtinguiſhes the ſincere ſoul from the hypocrite. JOB aſks concerning the latter—*Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty?* He may think of GOD with dread—mention him with apparent reſpect—ſerve him for an intereſt—and come to church for faſhion—but as to DELIGHT in the nature, will, dominion, and providence of GOD, he is no ſuch FRIEND as that comes to.

DELIGHT IN GOD is deſcribed as actually enjoyed by THE FRIENDS OF GOD—*thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart more than in the time that their corn and wine increaſed*†. *I will go*

† Pſ. iv. 7

to

to GOD, *to* GOD MY EXCEEDING GREAT JOY *. *The peace of* GOD *which paſſeth all underſtanding, keeps their hearts and minds* †, and ſubſiſts in the abſence of other enjoyments. *Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be on the vines; the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat: the flocks ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet will I* REJOICE IN THE LORD, *I will* JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION ‡.

In HUMAN FRIENDSHIPS the DELIGHT is ſuppoſed to be MUTUAL.—But you will aſk, can it be thus in the DIVINE? That a poor creature,

* Pſalm xliii. 4. † Philip. iv. 7.
‡ Hab. iii. 17, 18.

ſurrounded with neceſſities, oppreſſed with fears, encompaſſed with dangers, and obnoxious every hour to death, ſhould be willing to DELIGHT in the eternal and all-ſufficient GOD, is no way ſtrange.—But can he, the lofty, holy, happy JEHOVAH, can he DELIGHT in ſo mean polluted, and wretched a thing as man?

I muſt anſwer this query in the language of ſcripture, for no other authority will be taken. *The upright are his* DELIGHT *. *The Lord* DELIGHTETH *in thee: thy* GOD *ſhall* REJOICE OVER THEE †. *His countenance doth behold the upright* ‡. Here is the idea of that ſpecial attention

* Prov. xi. 20. † Iſaiah lxii. 4, 5.
‡ Pſalm xi. 7.

we

we give to any object that particularly pleaſes us—*the* PRAYER *of the upright is his* DELIGHT*. *He hath* PLEASURE *in the* PROSPERITY *of his ſervants* †.—*the Lord taketh* PLEASURE *in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy* ‡. Such language is ſufficient to overwhelm us with gratitude and amazement: the condeſcenſion and goodneſs of it are unequalled and infinite.

* Prov. xv. 8. † Pſalm xxxv. 27.
‡ Pſalm cxlvii. 11.

SECTION III.

Some farther articles of this FRIENDSHIP—*or, by which we approve ourſelves* FRIENDS OF GOD, *viz.* DEVOTIONAL INTERCOURSE — CHEARFUL SERVICE — PERSEVERING AND UNCHANGEABLE CONSTANCY.

IV. DEVOTIONAL INTERCOURSE. This naturally follows from that delight in GOD which was before ſpoken of—*delighting in the Almighty, and calling upon* GOD *, are mentioned in connection; the one being ſuppoſed to produce the other. We cannot long refrain the converſe of

* Job xxvii. 10.

them

them that we delight in: complacency in the heart will reſpire thro' the lips, and where GOD is the object, will teach the tongue the language of adoration, prayer, gratitude, and truſt.

GOD EXPECTS that, agreeably to the laws of FRIENDSHIP, we come near him, even to his ſeat, and tell him what it is that we deſire, hope, or fear: this is called in the Pſalms a pouring out of the heart before GOD—*truſt in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him*†. Not that GOD wants any information from us as to our circumſtances, proſpects, or ſtate of ſpirit; for he *knows our work, and our labour, and our patience*; knows every thing in

† Pſ. lxii. 8.

and about us; but that he accounts ſuch communication ſuitable to the dependence we place upon him, and the love we bear to him.

As GOD expects our devotional intercourſe with him, ſo he COMMANDS it.—*Call upon me in the day of trouble* †.—He ENCOURAGES it—by the notice he takes of it, and the manner in which he ſpeaks of the ſeveral branches of it. What we ſay of him he dignifies with the name of PRAISE, and accounts our impotent breath an addition to his tranſcendent glory.—*Whoſo offereth praiſe* GLORIFIETH *me* ‡. Our PRAYER is ſo highly acceptable to him, that he takes one of his titles from his readineſs in hearing it—*O*

† Pſ. l. 15. ‡ Pſ. l. 23.

thou

thou that heareſt prayer §. Our TEARS, whether of penitence or grief, he is ſaid to *put into his bottle* *; and the SIGHS which eſcape us from oppreſſing affliction, or our inexpreſſible gratitude, *come up before him* †. GOD ENCOURAGES our devotional intercourſe with himſelf, by the proviſion he has made for it; he has erected a throne of mercy, and placed before it his own Son in the character of mediator; who, the better to compaſſionate our infirmities, was himſelf made a partaker of humanity, and went before us in the road of temptation and ſuffering, and through the gates of death. We are directed to come with BOLDNESS to this throne ‡, becauſe GOD who

§ Pſ. lxv. 2. * Pſ. lvi. 8. † Pſ. xii. 5.
‡ Heb. iv. 16.

fits upon it, and Jeſus who intercedes before it, are both our FRIENDS: and for the ſame reaſon we may come with boldneſs to the throne of glory and of judgment.

This devotional intercourſe with GOD is a grand characteriſtic of a good man—*the wicked call not upon* GOD*—*they reſtrain prayer before him*† : from them no thanks that GOD is at hand to be praiſed or prayed to, to inſpect them, or receive the expreſſions of their duty to him; his preſence creates no joy to them. Give me a corner, wrap me in a cloud, encompaſs me with darkneſs, ſays the ſinner—all intercourſe with deity muſt, by ſome means or other, be intercepted—

* Pſ. xiv. 4. † Job xv. 4.

cauſe

*cauſe the holy one of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us**, ſaid a lawleſs and rebellious people to their prophet — remove the glorious object out of ſight—his brightneſs and purity confound us. But it is the conſolation and triumph of the righteous that GOD is ever near—that his omnipreſence admits of devotional intercourſe at all times, and that no circumſtance or place can preclude a loyal and confidential addreſs to heaven.

I ſhall only under this head exhibit the royal pſalmiſt as an example of that CONVERSE with GOD, which I am deſcribing as a branch of FRIENDSHIP with GOD. *As for me I will call upon God, and the Lord ſhall ſave me: evening and morning,*

* Iſa. xxx. 11.

and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he ſhall hear my voice *. He reſolved, that in this moſt noble and moſt pleaſing employment, he would prevent the morning, and that he would wait for GOD to ſpeak to him, and do homage at his throne more than they that waited for its earlieſt beams—*I ſay more than they that wait for the morning* †. Nay, midnight was to be witneſs to his adoring diſpoſitions and expreſſions—*my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches* ‡. He coveted the ſanctuary for the ſake of its divine inhabitant, and welcomed its ſervices with the moſt pious and exalted affections. *How*

* Pſ. lv. 16, 17. † Pſ. lxiii. 5, 6.
‡ Pſ. cxxx. 5, 6.

amiable

amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hoſts! my ſoul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my fleſh crieth out for the living GOD*. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple* †. *When ſhall I come and appear before God* ‡?

V. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD includes our CHEARFUL SERVICE done to him, and for him.

It enters into the notion of FRIENDSHIP, that we ſerve and aſſiſt each other to the utmoſt of our

* Pſal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. † Pſ. xxvii. 4.
‡ Pſ. xlii. 2.

power.

power. Properly ſpeaking indeed, our divine FRIEND needs no ſervice, and can receive no aſſiſtance from us: it muſt *be of his own that we give him. The earth is the Lords, and the fullneſs thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein*. God that made the world, and all that is therein, ſeeing he is Lord of all, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing†—the fountain of life is with him‡*, the fountain from whence we all participate. But GOD puts this dignity upon us, that he aſks our ſervice, and challenges our aſſiſtance. *Who is on the Lords ſide §?—whom ſhall I ſend*, viz. with my meſſages and inſtructions, *and*

* Pſ. xxiv. 1. † Acts xvii. 24.
‡ Pſ. xxxvi. 9. § Exod. xxxii. 26.

who

*who will go for us** ? As he dignifies what we SAY of him, and to him, with the name of PRAISE, ſo he dignifies what we DO for him with the name of SERVICE—yea, he calls it not only ſervice, which is what he may juſtly claim from all the creatures he has made, but he calls it HONOUR; which is a word of different import, and which expreſſes a thing we may either do, or forbear to do. *Them that* HONOUR *me I will* HONOUR ‡. There ſhall be HONOUR for HONOUR, only of a more excellent and valuable kind. *If any man ſerve me,* ſays Jeſus Chriſt, *him will my father* HONOUR §. And ſhall we refuſe our SERVICE to GOD our divine FRIEND, when he puts it upon

* Iſa. vi. 8. ‡ 1 Sam. ii. 30.
§ John xii. 26.

the

the footing of our doing him HONOUR? It is not becauſe he wants us, but becauſe he would do us a favour, by employing us, and by receiving from us again, as our gift to him, that which he firſt gave us: as a prince or a noble honours a poor peaſant, by firſt enabling him to offer gift and ſervice, and then condeſcendingly accepting, and kindly rewarding it. And what ſhould be the return, I will not ſay of our GENEROSITY, but of our EQUITY? Should it not be ſomething of this ſort—"Lord ſerve thyſelf of me, "and by me, as thou ſhalt pleaſe: "my body, my ſoul, my time, my "liberty, my life, all are thine; "all were given by thee, and I "would keep back nothing from "thee." This is the language of FRIENDSHIP, and it ſhould be our language

language to our high and everlaſting FRIEND—we receive from him upon all occaſions, we conſtantly lean upon his power, derive from his bounty, ſerve ourſelves of his creatures, and are repleniſhed out of his fullneſs—and ſhall we not ſerve his cauſe?—ſhall we enjoy breath and being from him, and yield back nothing to him? *Is this thy kindneſs to thy* FRIEND*?

VI. True FRIENDSHIP ſuppoſes PERSEVERING AND UNCHANGEABLE CONSTANCY—and this muſt enter into our FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

GOD is CONSTANT in his FRIENDSHIP for us: his promiſe is, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee* †—and his conduct is of a piece with

* 2 Sam. xvi. 17. † Heb. xiii. 5.

his

his promiſe—*for thou Lord haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee* *. Let us be CONSTANT in our FRIENDSHIP to him. We read concerning DAVID and JONATHAN, that they entered into a COVENANT of FRIENDSHIP † with each other, and that they SWARE ‡ to that covenant.—Something of this kind ſhould paſs—ſomething of this kind has frequently paſſed between GOD and us.—Every vow, every act of ſelf-dedication, every ſacrament, is a COVENANT or OATH of FRIENDSHIP with GOD. The very word SACRAMENT, by which the Lords Supper is denoted, ſignifies an OATH, and has a reference to that oath of fidelity that every ſoldier took to his

* Pſ. ix. 10. † 1 Sam. xviii. 3.
Ib. xx. 3. 17.

general.

general. So far we have vowed unto the Lord, and cannot go back, and therefore muſt perform our vows. *I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments* *.

CONSTANCY and PERSEVERANCE in our FRIENDSHIP with GOD is every way adviſeable. He is neceſſary to us, and we cannot do without him — that is one reaſon—"O "keep thy GOD thy FRIEND (ſaid a great and good man †) "for moſt "certain it is, thou wilt have occa- "ſion for him again, and thou "knoweſt not how ſoon—keep thy "intereſt in him, and eſtrange not

* Pſ. cxix. 106. † The Lord Chief Juſtice Hale. Contemp.

thyſelf

thyſelf from him." It is very unreaſonable and fooliſh when a preſent turn is ſerved to deſert God, as though we ſhould never want him again—as though we ſhould never more be in neceſſity, fear, or trouble. We ſhall want him as our FRIEND in every ſtep and ſtage of our journey through life—we ſhall eſpecially want him at death, and the approach of eternity—things that will come, and muſt be provided for. Beſides, come what will, the keeping our intereſt in GOD as our divine FRIEND, will always be an advantageous, and therefore a wiſe piece of conduct. Here we *chooſe that good part that ſhall never be taken from us.* Here we ſhall always be on the right ſide—for as GOD's cauſe muſt be triumphant, his FRIENDS muſt always

ways come off with honour. *Behold* (ſays the prophet) *all they that forſake thee ſhall be aſhamed* *: but ſtedfaſt adherence to GOD is equally our duty and our glory. *They ſhall not be aſhamed in an evil time, and in the days of famine they ſhall be ſatisfied* †.

Of this ſteady, perſevering, unchangeable conſtancy, the true ſervants of GOD, and more eſpecially his ſuffering ſervants, have been examples. Hence ſprang the noble deeds and wonderful atchievements of that bright liſt of heroes which is given us by the writer to the Hebrews ‡. The whole life, or daily converſe, of thoſe men upon earth,

* Jer. xvii. 13. † Pſ. xxxvii. 19.
‡ Chap. xi.

was

was one continued ſtruggle with ſuch evils as are moſt terrible to the apprehenſions of mankind—but they *waxed valiant in the fight* by keeping near to their divine leader—the ſtorm that was raiſed to drive them to a diſtance from him, drove them ſo much the cloſer to him—and they behaved themſelves in all reſpects as became the heirs of that moſt excellent portion that they looked for—ſhewing us, and all the world, how to *live as ſeeing him who is inviſible*—and chooſe preſent afflictions rather than ſinful pleaſures, from a reſpect to GOD as *the rewarder of them that ſeek him*.

But when I am enumerating the things which conſtitute us THE FRIENDS OF GOD, it would be a manifeſt

nifeſt omiſſion not to exhibit the diſtinguiſhing and characteriſtical virtues of ABRAHAM, to whom this title, FRIEND OF GOD, was originally given—this I will do in the following ſection.

SECT.

SECTION IV.

The characteriſtical virtues of ABRAHAM THE FRIEND OF GOD, viz. FAITH—RESIGNATION—ZEAL.

I. FAITH. FAITH in GOD, as the Almighty, wiſe and holy ruler of the univerſe—This was the leading virtue in ABRAHAM's character, on which account he is ſtiled *the father of them that believe* *, and *faithful Abraham* †. His FAITH, for the ſake of its excellent influence, was *imputed to him for righteouſneſs* ‡, and obtained for him the glorious name under which we are now conſidering him.

* Rom. iv. 11. † Gal. iii. 9.

The

The grand act of his FAITH the writer to the Hebrews ſpecifies in theſe words—*By* FAITH, ABRAHAM, *when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed—and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country; dwelling in tents with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is* GOD *. The original call of Abraham, to which theſe words refer, you have in the book of Geneſis †. How extraordinary a call was this! what fortitude and faith were neceſſary to obedience! To leave country and kindred, and

* Heb. xi. 8, 9, 10. † xii. 1—4.

go

go to a diſtant land—to believe himſelf a FATHER OF NATIONS, and to anticipate to himſelf a poſterity, numerous as the ſtars of the heaven, or the duſt of the earth, while as yet he was childleſs, and likely ever to remain ſo—to appropriate Canaan to this his promiſed ſeed, while he himſelf was but a pilgrim and a ſtranger there, without a foot of ground that he could call his own—and to look forward to their ſafe and advantageous ſettlement there, after many wonderful previous changes, and a bondage of four hundred years—What dependence upon GOD! what perſuaſion of his faithfulneſs and power muſt not all this argue!

However, ABRAHAM believed GOD, and obeyed. He believed that omnipotence could protect him in

in his ſojournings; yea, that with an omnipreſent deity on his ſide he ſhould always be AT HOME, in point of ſecurity and enjoyment—agreeably to the pleaſing ſentiment of MOSES, *Lord thou haſt been our dwelling place in all generations* *. In all our wanderings we had a HOME in thy favour. And as to that part of the promiſe that reſpected the numerouſneſs of his poſterity, we are told, that *againſt hope he believed in hope*, having that GOD to truſt *who quickeneth the dead* †. In the FAITH of GOD's promiſe to him, ſolemnly made, and frequently repeated, he both lived and died—as an inſtance of his faith, purchaſing a field of the people, amongſt whom he ſojourned, for a burying place for himſelf and

* Pſ. xc. 1. † Rom. iv. 17.

his beloved SARAH — firmly perſuaded that GOD would one day viſit his deſcendents, and bring them thither to mingle their duſt with his own, as afterwards came to paſs. You ſee this faith of ABRAHAM was an influential and powerful principle, engaging him to forſake houſe and country, and to go wherever GOD ſhould lead him.

Now it is but a part of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD for us to have the like FAITH in him, and, under its influence and direction, to ſubmit chearfully to all the changes of this unſettled world. All the changes of habitation, place, employment, and FRIENDS too, ſhould be willingly acquieſced in, ſo long as we have reaſon to believe that we are under the guidance and command of

our

our Almighty FRIEND above. We muſt not look at any circumſtances of hardneſs or grievouſneſs that his calls may in their firſt aſpect wear, but muſt look at the power, truth, and goodneſs of him that calls us. He can command us no where, but he can take care of us; for the world is all his own, and every creature can be made a miniſter of his providence; in a wilderneſs he *can ſatisfy us as with marrow and fatneſs*. We know not indeed particularly in what methods he will do it; yet in whatever way it ſhall be done, there is pleaſure in the thought, and to GOD there is infinite eaſe in the work.

II. RESIGNATION was another eminent virtue in ABRAHAM's character. The wonderful inſtance of it, which is recorded to his immor-

tal honour, is the readineſs he manifeſted to offer his ſon in ſacrifice at GOD's command; that ſon, the gift of whom was the beginning of the fulfilment of GOD's comprehenſive promiſe to him, and upon whoſe life the compleat fulfilment abſolutely depended. *By faith*, ABRAHAM, *when he was tried, offered up* ISAAC; *and he that had received the promiſes, offered up his only begotten ſon, of whom it was ſaid, that in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called* *. What an act of FRIENDSHIP to GOD, and truſt in him was this! The fact ſpeaks for itſelf, and needs no comment. In proportion to the degree of our FRIENDSHIP with men, we reſign ourſelves to them, and put our ALL into their hands: in our carriage

* Heb. xi. 17, 18.

towards

towards our great and heavenly FRIEND, our reſignation ſhould be entire; becauſe his goodneſs and wiſdom are infinite. He firſt gave us all we poſſeſs, and ſtill knows how to make the beſt uſe of all, both for us and for himſelf. He takes as well as gives with the kindeſt intention, and therefore is in each caſe equally intitled to our *bleſſing him*. It was ſpoken like a FRIEND, *though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him* †. I will put my life in his hands, nor abate my confidence in him, if he take even that away. Conſider the circumſtances of him who made this noble declaration. His ſubſtance was deſtroyed — his children were ſlain — his body tormented with the ingenious cruelty

* Job. xiii. 15.

of a devil—and nothing was left him but a few falſe and miſtaken FRIENDS, ſome of whom tempted him to renounce his religion, and others would have perſuaded him that he had no religion to renounce: at one time urging him to revile his GOD, and at another to revile himſelf: and yet in the midſt of all theſe trials JOB *ſinned not, nor charged* GOD *fooliſhly* *. Acknowledging GOD's right to ALL, FRIENDSHIP muſt not be offended if he take SOME. There is a ſpeech of the pious Archbiſhop of Cambray, that ſeems worthy of a place in the inſpired volume. "If there "needed no more than to move a "ſtraw to bring him back to life "again †, I would not do it, ſince

* Job i. 23. † Meaning his royal pupil the Duke of Burgundy. Cambray's Life.

"the

"the pleaſure of GOD is otherwiſe." When DAVID and JONATHAN had made a covenant of FRIENDSHIP with each other, the next thing we read is, that *Jonathan ſtripped himſelf of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments even to his ſword, and to his bow, and to his girdle* *. He gave him all he had, whether for covering, ornament, or defence. Something of this kind ſhould be our behaviour towards our divine FRIEND. We ſhould be willing to ſtrip ourſelves of all mortal advantages and delights for his ſake, holding nothing too dear to part with at his bidding; nothing our own when he calls for it from us: and this in imitation of the reſignation and FRIENDSHIP of

* 1 Sam. xviii. 4.

the Redeemer of mankind, who ſtripped himſelf to cloath us—emptied himſelf to fill us—put on our poor ragged nature, that we might be adorned with the divine excellencies of his. *Brethren, ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who when he was rich, for our ſakes became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich**. Reſignation is the true temper of Chriſtianity; it is that embracing the croſs of Chriſt, without which we cannot be worthy of him: and it is moreover the certain mark of a great and heroic mind. To be exceſſively clinging to our mortal comforts, as if a ſeparation were our inevitable and immediate deſtruction, argues a little mind that has never been enlarged

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

by

by the hope of eternal objects: but when we can quit the beaten road of preſent ſelf-ſeeking, and ſelf-gratification, which moſt men walk in, and in a ſteady and placid manner ſubject the diſpoſal of all our bleſſings to the GOD who beſtowed them all —this is a great ſpirit; it is that overcoming both the world and ourſelves, which is the higheſt victory we can attain in our militant ſtate here upon earth, and which ſhall be followed with the hundred-fold reſtitution of all that we now loſe in heaven.

III. ZEAL was another diſtinguiſhed virtue in ABRAHAM's character: ZEAL for GOD and his honour amongſt men. This kind of zeal is inſeparable from true FRIENDSHIP. What! is it my FRIEND's cauſe? I'll ſerve the cauſe of my

FRIEND to the utmoſt of my power. And this ſhould be our reſolution with reſpect to GOD our Almighty FRIEND on high. GOD himſelf bears teſtimony to ABRAHAM on this head. He gave this as one of his reaſons for communicating to him the terrible judgments he was about to execute upon the ancient ſinners: *Shall I hide from* ABRAHAM *the thing that I am about to do?*—and why not from Abraham as well as others?—it was becauſe of the good uſe he would make of the intelligence, and the manner in which he would apply it for the ſpreading a reverence for GOD and his government all around him. *I know him, and he will command his children and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the* LORD, *to do juſtice and judgment.*

judgment *. I KNOW ABRAHAM: I can truſt him for this. This is a great character, and it ſhould be ours. It will be ours, if our FRIENDSHIP to GOD is ſincere. Almighty GOD has a cauſe and intereſt in this apoſtate world, and he calls upon us to defend and ſerve it. Our pen, our purſe, our learning, our authority, all the ſeveral advantages of our ſtations and callings, muſt be directed to this end. To enlighten the ignorant—to reclaim the wicked—to convince gainſayers—to direct, encourage, and ſtrengthen in the road to eternal life—to turn men from darkneſs to light—and from the power of ſatan unto GOD—this, this is ſerving the cauſe and intereſt of GOD in the world: the doing this

* Gen. xviii. 19.

he

he calls and accounts our HONOURING him: our neglecting to do it he reſents, and will puniſh. And how juſtly? how juſtly may he upbraid and condemn our ſupineneſs and indifference in this article? A liberal and ingenuous perſon would be very deeply wounded by ſuch a recrimination as this, you have not uſed me well; you have not treated me like a FRIEND. Let us all take care that the great GOD have not this charge to bring againſt us. A FRIEND! and ſee my name diſhonoured—my bounty abuſed—and my authority trampled in the dirt! This is what GOD in effect hath ſaid; and with ſevere upbraidings, very awakening chaſtiſements have followed the indifference of ſome upon this head, who were nevertheleſs in their own diſpoſitions and intentions ſincere

cere and upright before him. You are acquainted with the calamities that alighted upon ELI's family; and this is given as the cauſe; *the iniquity which he knew*, but did not correct; *becauſe his ſons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not* *. The true FRIEND of GOD ſays, *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee* †? *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my* GOD ‡. *I am a companion of them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts* §. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven.*

* 1 Sam. iii. 13. † Pſ. cxix. 115. ‡ Ver. 63.
§ Matt. vi. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Some moſt excellent perfections of GOD, *which render a ſtate of* FRIENDSHIP *with him infinitely deſirable,* viz. POWER—OMNIPRESENCE—FAITHFULNESS—ETERNITY.

I. POWER. This is a venerable attribute of deity, and when conceived of as engaged on our ſide, pleaſing and lovely. *I know that thou canſt do every thing* * (ſaid JOB) ſtruck with awe at thoſe wonderful effects of the power of GOD, which in the lofty ſtrain of

* Job xlii. 2.

deity

deity had been recounted to him; and by the mention of which all created power was confounded and ſilenced. *If I ſpeak of ſtrength, lo, he is ſtrong* *: when aſcribed to him the word has a meaning. POWER *belongeth unto* GOD †. Creature claims muſt be excluded; all being weakneſs when ſet in compariſon with his might. Beſides extraordinary exertions of the power of GOD, which have in all ages commanded the attention and fear of the children of men, the ſtill and uniform diſplay of it, in upholding the frame of the earth, and the orbs of the heaven, challenges our admiration, and we may daily ſtop and adore it. And in this power of GOD, the FRIEND of GOD has an intereſt.

* Job ix. 19. † Pſ. lxii. 11.

GOD

God is described as in a manner poſſeſſing it for his ſake, and he is encouraged to make his humble claims upon it. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him* *. Armed (if I may ſo ſpeak) with the omnipotence of the God they ſerved, with what ſuperior grandeur did three youths reply to the threats of an angry monarch! *We are not careful to anſwer thee in this matter: our* God, *whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King* †. Nebuchadnezzar's enraged and diſtorted viſage, the moſt mighty men of his army that he called about him to revenge this inſult, his claim of uncontroulable do-

* 2 Chron. xvi. 9. † Dan. iii. 17.

minion,

minion, and his fiery furnace for all that diſputed it—convey but a poor idea of greatneſs in compariſon with this compoſed but elevated ſpeech. And as in this memorable inſtance, ſo on more common occaſions *he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he encreaſeth ſtrength* *: he fortifies the ſpirits of his ſervants within, and carries them through and above all temptations and afflictions without: his power extends to all worlds: he can change and controul the courſe of this for the benefit of his FRIENDS, (and he has done it in very aſtoniſhing particulars) and can conduct them ſafely and advantageouſly to a better—with him is EVERLASTING STRENGTH—. And this is what we want, becauſe

* Iſ. xl. 29.

we

we are made for an everlaſting exiſtence. Give me the FRIEND that can conduct me through all the changes of life, death, and the reſurrection.

II. GOD is OMNIPRESENT: and this makes him a moſt deſirable FRIEND.

Amongſt men diſtance makes many a chaſm in thoſe FRIENDSHIPS which death will ſhortly diſſolve. But our divine FRIEND is ever near. We cannot ſee thoſe diſconſolate borders that are not filled with his preſence and bounty, or from which the expreſſions of our duty and joy cannot reach him. A virtuous heathen once conſoled himſelf with this perſuaſion, that whitherſoever he ſhould be baniſhed, he ſhould ſtill be able

to

to admire the works of GOD, and to maintain converſe with GOD *. This makes every place alike good to the FRIEND of GOD; and in every place he is alike happy. His prayer can no where be loſt in the wind, nor his profeſſions of reſpect ſcattered with the duſt. GOD is *near to all them that call upon him* †—near to ſupply, *near to juſtify* ‡ them. And as his PRESENCE, ſo his KNOWLEDGE is univerſal and infinite: he can judge of our appeals from men—of our appeals to himſelf—ſo that we may at all times, and in all places, have the divine ſatisfactions of conſcious innocence, and an approving GOD—*thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee* ||.

* Vid. Title Page. † Pſ. cxlv. 18.
‡ Iſa. l. 8. || John xxi. 17.

Let

Let us a little further indulge to the pleaſure of this thought, viz. that GOD is a FRIEND ever preſent with us: there are ſeveral kinds and inſtances of ſolitude to which it may be moſt charmingly applied. Sometimes we CHOOSE to be alone, for reſt of the body, or refreſhment of the ſpirits — in this inſtance how pleaſing is it that we have our heavenly FRIEND with us, ſo as to be able to ſay, *I will both lay me down in peace and ſleep, for thou Lord only makeſt me dwell in ſafety* *. *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee* †. Solitude may be choſen for improvement in knowledge and devotion — Now as this ſolitude eſpecially invites the preſence of GOD, ſo it is made highly delightful and improving by

* Pſ. iv. 8. † Pſ. cxxxix. 18.

it.

it. *Our father ſeeth in ſecret*; and a good perſon, at ſuch a ſeaſon, has both *meat to eat*, and company to keep, *that the world knoweth not of*.

And as ſolitude may in ſome caſes be *choſen by us*, ſo it may in others be *forced upon us*. There is a ſolitude occaſioned by diſtance from home—by loſs of FRIENDS—*Lover and Friend haſt thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkneſs* *. There is the ſolitude of a ſick chamber—and above all, the ſolitude of death. Then we muſt be alone. I don't mean without company near us, or attendance upon us; but without any one dying with us, and accompanying us in the unknown path to the world of ſpirits. No,

* Pſ. lxxxviii. 18.

no:

no: dying is a tranſaction that will wholly lie between GOD and ourſelves. To have him then preſent as a FRIEND—to have him come to us at death, as to PAUL in the ſtorm, ſaying, FEAR NOT, for I am with thee—this is ſufficient to make a good man leap into his grave for joy. Doſt thou, bleſſed LORD, thus command me, FEAR NOT?—*then though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death*, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL—*for thou art with me* *.

III. THE FAITHFULNESS of GOD is another attribute that makes him a moſt deſirable FRIEND to us.

A man who was himſelf very inſincere and prevaricating, could bear

* Pſ. xxiii. 4.

this

this teſtimony to GOD: *He is not a man that he ſhould lie: Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it* *? In this atteſtation of the faithfulneſs of GOD, there is an oblique glance at the unfaithfulneſs of men. They impoſe upon our credulity, fail us in our dependencies, and diſappoint us in our expectations; it is an old complaint, that *the faithful fail from amongſt the children of men* ‡: but *who, O Lord* GOD *of hoſts, is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee? and to thy faithfulneſs round about* †? What ſad work is often made in human FRIENDSHIPS by cauſeleſs jealouſies, evil reports, ſlender ſurmiſes, and the imagination of neglects and offences, which were never real; but our divine FRIEND both knows our ſincerity,

* Numb. xxiii. 19. ‡ Pſ. xii. 1.
† Pſ. lxxxix. 8.

and

and pardons our infirmity; and therefore with him we can never ſuffer from ſuch cauſes. Above all, what bonds of faith and FRIENDSHIP have been broken by wants, and cares, and calamities on one ſide, and wealth, and honour, and elevation on the other! How few will know a man in trouble, or be willing to renew or acknowledge former connections with him! *I looked on the right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me, no man cared for my ſoul* *. *All my inward* FRIENDS *abhorred me* † (ſaid JOB:) his crime was, that he was become afflicted and poor. This made a diſciple deny his maſter: *I know not the man* ‡. He

* Pſ. cxlii. 4, 5. † Job xix. 19.
‡ Matt. xxvi. 72.

knew

knew him when he was upon the mount, ſhining in all the glories of his transfiguration — he knew him when he fed the multitude by miracle—and was forward to declare his knowledge—*thou art Chriſt, the ſon of the living* GOD *. But when he ſtood a poor inſulted priſoner at the bar of the High Prieſt, then he knew him not. This was PAUL's caſe too: *no man ſtood by me, but all men forſook me* †. So little will the beſt cauſe ſecure the world's attachment to one in diſtreſs. But GOD's ways are not as ours. He is with us while we are with him. Trouble is deſcribed as inviting his help and preſence; and he is invoked by the nearneſs and extremity of it: *Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none*

* Matth. xvi. 16. † 2 Tim. iv. 16.

to help *. Vain as this plea would be with men, it has its power and prevalence with GOD. He met JACOB and DAVID in a wilderneſs—and followed JOSEPH into a priſon. He came to PAUL when in the caſtle of the chief captain—and to add dignity to deliverance upon another occaſion, ſhook the foundations of the place he was confined in by an earthquake ‡. The reſt of the APOSTLES were *perſecuted, but not forſaken.*—JOHN, in his baniſhment to a diſconſolate iſland, was entertained with the revelation of celeſtial glories: and JESUS, in his unparalleled ſufferings, was never *alone, the Father being with him.* Thus faithful is GOD in his FRIENDSHIP and favour: O let us be faithful to him

* Pſ. xxii. 11. ‡ Acts xvi.

in

in return—let us not break with him who will never break with us—and whoſe promiſe is, *be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life* *. Let us, with the ſpirit and language of holy reſolution, demand with St. Paul, *who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of* GOD? Let us with faith and fortitude, like him, give the challenge to all human evils, and we ſhall, as he was, be *more than conquerors through him that hath loved us* †.

IV. GOD is an EVERLASTING FRIEND: and this makes his FRIENDSHIP to the utmoſt degree deſirable.

Hear and bow at his majeſtic name: THE KING ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE‡! Un-

* Rev. ii. 10. † Rom. viii. 35.
‡ 1 Tim. i. 17.

changeable life is a moſt glorious attribute. This ſhews unqueſtionable DIVINITY. LIVING and TRUE are therefore joined together in the ſcripture accounts of the moſt high JEHOVAH. *The Lord is the* TRUE GOD, *he is the* LIVING GOD, *and an* EVERLASTING KING *.—*The* LIVING *and* TRUE GOD †: the TRUE, becauſe the LIVING. This juſt and exalted ſentiment we have in another place ‡. *The bleſſed and* ONLY *Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,* WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY. It is this that makes him the ONLY potentate, as well as the BLESSED, viz. his excluſive claim to immortality. Without immortality all is mock majeſty. We

* Jer. x. 10. † 1 Theſſ. i. 9.
‡ 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

give

give the titles of HIGH and MIGHTY, and POWERFUL to the princes of the earth; and with parade and ſolemnity proclaim them over their duſt: but can there be a ſeverer ſatire? But to GOD belongs original, underived, incorruptible life; he *has life in himſelf* *, and is the ſpring of it to others; and therefore very ſuitably addreſſed by a good man in this form, GOD *of my life!* The IMMORTALITY of GOD makes him the worthy object of WORSHIP. PAUL demanded worſhip to him from the heathen by this conſideration: *We preach unto you that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the* LIVING GOD ‡. This attribute makes him worthy of our TRUST alſo—of our

* John vi. 26. † Pſ. xlii. 8.
‡ Acts xiv. 15.

truſt in the extremeſt dangers, and our OBEDIENCE in the greateſt ſufferings—*therefore we both labour, and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the* LIVING GOD *. How does death ſink the value of human FRIENDSHIPS! A man ſmiles upon me, and promiſes me fair; and the next news I hear of him is, that he is dead. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that day his thoughts periſh* †. Hence the complaint of many a deſerted creature: I had a FRIEND once that would have ſtood by me in my preſent difficulties: I could aſk his counſel, I could command his ſubſtance—but he is gone. GOD will leave us with no ſuch complaints: fitly therefore is the LIVING GOD con-

* 1 Tim. iv. 10. † Pſ. cxlvi. 4.

traſted

traſted with UNCERTAIN RICHES, and the fading enjoyments of this world *—*the* LORD *liveth, and bleſſed be my rock, and let the* GOD *of my ſalvation be exalted* †. The IMMORTALITY of GOD is a ſufficient ſecurity for the accompliſhment of all his promiſes and our hopes: while GOD is ETERNAL as well as FAITHFUL, no promiſe can be loſt. Death may intervene, and we paſs away, but his promiſe ſhall ſtand. From this ETERNITY of GOD in conjunction with his TRUTH, we believe there ſhall be a reſurrection of the patriarch's duſt, and the martyr's aſhes; and the fulfilment of all their expectations who died in faith. ABEL's *righteouſneſs*—ENOCH's *godlineſs*—NOAH's *pious fear*—and ABRA-

* 1 Tim. vi. 17. † 2 Sam. xxii. 47.

HAM's *ſtedfaſt faith*—are all ſure of recompence; and *we ſhall be made perfect with them.* The long interval between death and the reſurrection ſhall paſs under his eye; and at the *ſet time that he has appointed*, he ſhall remember us; and wiſe and holy men of all nations and ages, from the beginning of the creation to the end of it, ſhall be inſtated in the poſſeſſion of eternal life together, by that GOD to *whom one day is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day* *; his eternity ſwallowing up time, and all the periods by which we divide it.

It is the remark of a great and noble writer †—"That in a FRIEND "a man perpetuates himſelf; in

* 2 Pet. iii. 8. † The Lord Bacon.

"that

"that ſuch a one will guard his "children, his family, and his af-"fairs after him." With how much more reaſon may this be ſaid of our IMMORTAL FRIEND, whoſe *mercy is from generation to generation upon them that fear him*; whoſe providence will brighten the character, and endear the memory of the juſt man; and who can proſper and bleſs every valuable intereſt that we leave behind us in this world, as well as keep the immortal ſpirits we reſign to him till the day of recompence.

CHAP. VI.

ADVANTAGES *resulting from this representation of a religious character,* viz. *that it is maintaining* FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. RELIGION *is exhibited in the most pleasing aspect —an incomparable lustre and beauty are cast upon* PROVIDENCE—AFFLICTION *is made light and easy— the notion of* DEATH *is improved, and the prospect of it made familiar and amiable.*

I. RELIGION is exhibited in the most pleasing form it can possibly wear.

A love-

A lovelier idea of religion could not have been deviſed: one would imagine it was ſo repreſented on purpoſe to engage and charm the world, and make all mankind its votaries. How good is GOD to put the whole of our devotional demeanour to him upon this footing! and inſtead of commanding us to ſubmit to him as ſlaves, or obey him as ſubjects, to ſay, live in daily intercourſe with me as FRIENDS! Your love and truſt, your devotedneſs and ſubjection, your prayer and praiſe, ſhall be called FRIENDSHIP, and not DUTY. How good is GOD on his part! and how delightful and eligible ſhould all religious ſentiments, habits, and acts, be on ours! Ye who fancy a harſhneſs and bondage to belong to religious exerciſes, attend to this view of them, They

are

are ſo many ways by which a good man expreſſes his FRIENDSHIP for the beſt of beings, and draws down his FRIENDSHIP upon himſelf in return. Conſider religion in this light, and it is well worth while to leave the moſt important buſineſs — the moſt entertaining company, to mind it. A good man leaves company and FRIENDS not to perform a hard taſk, or to go into a diſconſolate ſolitude: What does he go for? (ſays the gay ſenſualiſt, or the ſordid worldling) for! why to enjoy the beſt of all FRIENDS, and to engage for a while in the beſt of all buſineſs. To delight himſelf in the contemplation of infinite perfection— to put himſelf under the guidance of almighty Providence—to diveſt his anxious heart of every care, by caſting all his cares upon GOD—to

relieve

relieve himſelf under every oppreſſing evil by the exerciſes of reſignation and patience—to make all proſpects bright by the elevations of faith and hope—and to eſtabliſh his own comfort, by looking to GOD as his portion, and to heaven as his home. This is the true light in which to conceive of ſecret religion; and of the FRIEND of GOD as employed in it—and is this gloomy? No wonder that ſuch a man reliſhes RETIREMENT, and welcomes the ſeaſons of it: to him it is no act of ſelf-denial, no kind of unwilling conſtraint, no interruption of beloved pleaſures, to retire and converſe with his maker: ſuch a man (according to the ſaying of the philoſopher) "Is never leſs alone "than when moſt alone." A ſtranger intermeddleth not with his joys; and

in

in his communion with the Father of ſpirits, he enjoys more in an hour than the ſons of diſſipation, and profeſſed pleaſure enjoy in a life time.

And then as to PUBLIC DUTIES—Conſider THEM in the light of FRIENDSHIP WITH DEITY, and as the means both of expreſſing and improving that FRIENDSHIP, and what an appearance have they! inſtead of ſaying with the hypocritical Jews—*when will the new moon be gone, and the ſabbath be ended—what a wearineſs is it!* We ſhall ſay with another perſon, *a day in thy courts is better than a thouſand.*

And as the PLEASURE of religion is manifeſt from this repreſentation of it, viz. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, ſo alſo its GRANDEUR: the doing juſtly,

juſtly, and loving mercy, is called WALKING WITH GOD, than which no higher honour can be put upon man.

II. This repreſentation of religion, viz. that it is FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, reflects an incomparable luſtre and beauty upon PROVIDENCE.

How delightful a thought is it (and it is a thought that may at any time, at all times, ſpring up in a good man's mind) all that pertains to me, to my preſent, or my final ſtate—all is in the hands of a FRIEND, of a powerful, a faithful, an ever preſent FRIEND: I can be no where but he will be with me—can ſee no changes but what he muſt appoint—can ſuſtain no evils but what he can over-rule to my benefit:

if

if I ſuffer, my ſufferings won't be penal; they will be but a part of his FRIENDLY diſcipline; the fruit of love, and not of wrath.

When our bleſſed Saviour attempted to fortify the minds of his timorous diſciples, he did it by this conſideration, viz. that he was their faſt and aſſured FRIEND. *I ſay unto you*, MY FRIENDS, *be not afraid of them that kill the body* *; let my FRIENDSHIP preclude your fear. I will take care of my FRIENDS—ſo that either your enemies ſhall not kill you, or if they kill you, they ſhall not hurt you. Now, foraſmuch as GOD calls us FRIENDS, let his declared FRIENDSHIP have a like effect upon us; pacifying our ſpirits,

* Luke xii. 4.

diſſipating

diſſipating our fears, and enabling us to look forward into futurity with all the confidence of faith and hope. Is GOD my FRIEND (may a good man ſay) then he will order all for the beſt, both while I live, and when I die; and after my death he can take care of all that I care for in this world; ſo that every intereſt is ſecure, and every fear groundleſs. This makes the divine government appear lovely, and our concern with the world ſit eaſy upon our ſpirits.

III. Is a religious man, as ſuch, a FRIEND OF GOD, how prepared ſhould he be for afflictions, in virtue of ſuch a relation!

He may in all conditions adopt St. PAUL's conciſe and deſcriptive account of himſelf and his brethren:

troubled

troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed: perplexed, but not in deſpair: caſt down, but not deſtroyed: as ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things *. A FRIEND OF GOD can never be in a ſtate that is to be pronounced deſperate. LIFE itſelf is not eſſential to his comfort: he may be happy though he dies; and he muſt die before he can be happy completely. In all afflictive changes the FRIEND of GOD has HIM near, who is denominated the GOD OF HOPE; THE GOD WHO COMFORTETH THEM THAT ARE CAST DOWN: the goods of ſuch a man may be ſpoiled, but his ſoul abides in peace: in the exerciſes of DIVINE FRIENDSHIP, ſuch as reſignation, faith, and hope, he

* 2 Cor. iv. 8.—vi. 9.

has

has one heaven in poſſeſſion, as well as another in reſerve: in the cruel diſappointments and bitter complaints of the *children of this world, whoſe portion is in this life*, he has no part or ſhare: his *treaſure is in heaven* *: and can therefore no more be affected by the convulſions of the earth, than the ſun can be injured by a ſtorm, or the firmament be removed by an earthquake. And, as agreeably to our Saviour's remark, *where the treaſure is, the heart will be alſo*—I add, that the FRIEND of GOD has, in his heavenly diſpoſitions and affections, a fund of ſublime and permanent entertainment: he has that ſpiritual mind which is life and peace, and which effectually preſerves both the tran-

* Matt. vi. 20.

quility

quility and grandeur of the ſoul of man.

Accordingly, ſecure and happy in the FRIENDSHIP of heaven, St. Paul bids defiance to the miſeries of the earth, in a ſtrain of rhetoric, which nothing but the divine Spirit could ever have dictated. One who poſſeſſed as much natural greatneſs of ſoul as an apoſtle*, and THAT carried to the higheſt pitch by the noble conſiderations and the moſt excellent influence of Chriſtianity, gloſſes upon the incomparable paſſage I refer to † ſomewhat in this manner. Having magnanimouſly challenged every POSSIBLE trouble to ſeparate him from GOD, and by ſo doing

* The pious and truly venerable archbiſhop Leighton. † Rom. viii. 35, &c.

compleat

compleat his wretchedneſs, ſuch as *tribulation, diſtreſs, perſecution, famine, nakedneſs, peril, and the ſword*— and finding none of theſe to anſwer to the challenge — but that both ſingly, and in this combination into which he had thrown them, all were ſilent—he goes on in the elevations of his faith to ſuppoſe even IMPOSSIBLE trials, ſuch as the attempts of *angels, principalities,* and *powers,* againſt him: he may indeed be ſuppoſed to ſpeak of EVIL angels and powers: but ſhould he be conceived as ſpeaking of GOOD ones, (q. d.) the very angels of heaven, were they to attempt it, could not ſeparate us from the divine FRIENDSHIP, or make us wretched while we enjoyed it—there would be nothing in this but what might be accounted for by the uncommon ſublimity

limity of PAUL's ſpirit in the preſent caſe, affecting to encounter difficulties that will never happen: *Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors: I am perſuaded* that theſe can do nothing againſt us.

IV. If a religious life be FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, then to a good man the notion of DEATH is greatly improved; and the proſpect of it is made familiar and pleaſant.

Is GOD our FRIEND! then dying is going to a FRIEND, to a powerful and faithful FRIEND, with whom we ſhall find every thing that can make up our happineſs—and with whom we may ſecurely leave all our affairs. It is going to a FRIEND that will meet us on the road—conduct us to his houſe—and make us everlaſtingly

everlaſtingly welcome and happy there.

The parting with FRIENDS is the very ſting of death itſelf. But how is this ſting extracted, when it is recollected—that though death diſſolves all other FRIENDSHIPS, it confirms and eſtabliſhes this, which is the beſt of all. So far from diſſolving this beſt of all connections, it makes it the ſtricter, the more perfect and entire, as well as perpetual.

How pleaſing a reflection is it to croſs a good man's mind when heart and fleſh are failing: I am going to my divine FRIEND, without any thing unfriendly in me towards him, and without cauſe for fearing any thing unfriendly from him. Death

is

is his meſſenger—his friendly meſſenger—I know who calls me away by him: it is no enemy—it is no ſtranger: we have lived in friendly intercourſe while at a diſtance; and now he calls me nearer, that the correſpondence may be continued with infinite advantage to all eternity.

A perſon who dies thus, needs never to object either to the time or the manner of dying: he can never be ſo attached to other FRIENDS, can never be ſo buſy, either with them, or for them, but it muſt be worth while to throw up all, and go at GOD's ſummons. To depart and be with GOD, muſt, to the FRIEND OF GOD, be far better than to remain here in any imaginable circumſtances of happineſs or uſefulneſs.

fulneſs. Nothing can be loſt to him, by finding himſelf in GOD's arms: no pleaſure loſt, by entering into his maſter's joy—his father's houſe—his friend's embrace.

Now what a view of death is this! The FRIENDS of GOD's FRIEND need not ſay as THOMAS did with reſpect to LAZARUS, *Let us alſo go that we may die with him:* he has the beſt of all FRIENDS not dying with him, but living for him: living to receive him, and eternally to bleſs him.

This is the true FRIENDSHIP IN DEATH.

This is dying SAFELY. Men out of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, may be ſaid, not ſo properly TO DIE,

as to be SLAIN WITH DEATH: of them death makes un utter end, ſo far as relates to hope and happineſs—the FRIEND of GOD ſurvives the blow and triumphs beyond it.

This is dying COMFORTABLY. This FRIENDSHIP ſoftens the dying pillow—delights in the agonies of death—and gilds the hovering ſhadows of the grave. With the DIVINE FRIENDSHIP death will be no more to us than it was to MOSES: GOD ſaid, *Go up into that mountain and die* *: and his ſervant did it. No more than JACOB's deſcent into Egypt: *Fear not,* JACOB *to go down into Egypt, for I will go with thee, and will ſurely bring thee up again* †. With GOD as our FRIEND, we may

* Deut. xxxii. 49. † Gen. xlvi. 3.

as

as chearfully go down to OUR houſe of bondage; and with an equal certainty of being brought up again. In his own time, he will remember us: and will ſend us deliverance from death, by the ſame hand that has already brought us deliverance from ſin. When that ſolemn and intereſting period which he has appointed ſhall be come, and all perſons and things in the upper and lower worlds ſhall be ready, he will *give commandment concerning our bones:* the dead ſhall ariſe: his own FRIENDS firſt: and the world, like a theatre that has anſwered the purpoſe for which it was erected, and which was no other than the tranſacting the wonderful work of human redemption, ſhall be broken to pieces and conſumed. A certain emperor* having on

* Theodoſius.

a great occaſion, opened his priſons, and releaſed his captives, is ſaid to have expreſſed himſelf in the following humane, though inefficacious wiſh—*and now, would to* GOD *I could open the tombs, and give life to the dead*—this our divine and heavenly FRIEND, both CAN do, and WILL do. *Our friend* LAZARUS *ſleepeth:* (ſaid Jeſus Chriſt) *but I go to awake him out of his ſleep* *—ſo will GOD awake his FRIENDS from death—raiſe them by his power, and adorn them with his glory. And what account ſhould we make of death, when it is to be followed by ſuch a reſurrection? Come when, and how it will, death will be our FRIEND while GOD is ſuch. The firſt attacks may ſtartle and alarm us, but as the power

* John xi. 11.

of

of death is broken, our ſafety and comfort are enſured. At the beginning of the ſtorm the diſciples were affrighted—but as ſoon as they knew that it was JESUS, they took courage. Something of this kind will happen to us at death: the firſt onſet will diſmay and terrify—for which reaſon death is called the failure of our HEART, as well as of our FLESH—but as ſoon as our relation to GOD, as FRIENDS, is recollected, the tumult will ſubſide; we ſhall venture into the world of eternity at his call, as PETER walked upon the ſea at the call of Chriſt—ſhall find all firm and ſtable under us, and ſhall get to the haven where we would be.

Compared with this, how mean is the ambition of dying rich! Or in any of thoſe circumſtances of diſ-

tinction, and advantage over others, which are ſo highly valued, and ſo vehemently coveted by the children of men! A man may have all the comforts of this life, and yet die comfortleſs: in death as well as at the reſurrection, *the upright ſhall have the dominion*. Let them die upon a ſolitary mountain, or in an unfrequented wood—nothing is loſt in point either of ſafety or benefit—the way to GOD will lie open to a ready and well prepared ſpirit from whatſoever place—and ſhort will its journey be to that world where all are FRIENDS of GOD—where the ſacred flame is reflected from breaſt to breaſt, and all diſaffection baniſhed for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Some GENERAL REFLECTIONS *on the ſubject of* FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. *We ſee where to place the real dignity of human nature—we learn that living in the body is entirely conſiſtent with a very noble and exalted kind of life—and, we ſhould aſpire after that life, it being no more than the excellence and happineſs of our firſt eſtate.*

I. WE ſee where to place the real dignity of human nature. A CAPACITY for THIS FRIENDSHIP, and moſt of all, the CULTIVATION of it, raiſes us above

the brutes, and puts us upon a level with angels. Do angels converſe with GOD—ſo may we; are they bleſſed in his FRIENDSHIP and favour—we may be the ſame. Upon this let us value ourſelves: and the more we do value ourſelves upon this honour, the leſs ſhall we be in danger of over-valuing ourſelves upon other, and inferior conſiderations. Men uſually rate themſelves high enough, but they do it for things that are very remote from true greatneſs, and which can never conſtitute it.

Some value themſelves upon FORM and FIGURE, and other graceful ornaments of the body—theſe to be ſure attract the eyes and engage the inclinations of men: the world admires them, and gallantry ADORES them:

them: but they that have the greateſt ſhare of them, are daily ſubject to altering diſeaſes, and to ghaſtly death. Such as are worſhipped for theſe advantages to-day, may not be known by them to-morrow. *They ſhall not ſay this was Jezebel—or this was the daughter of a king.*

Others value themſelves upon their WEALTH—we have ſo much property in this world which we inhabit—let ſuch know that the world acknowledges no proprietor but the LORD that made it: it changes its owners daily; ſerves one man, or one generation of men, as contentedly as it has ſerved another: and is perpetually receiving into its bowels proud creatures, who fancied themſelves to have dominion over

it. THE MOST HIGH is the POSSESSOR of heaven and earth, as well as the CREATOR.

Others value themſelves upon HONOUR—upon an airy title—upon gaudy inſignia, which have no meaning but what a weak and fantaſtic conceit give them—upon a STAR or a RIBBAND: a man lifts up his head on account of theſe things, and cries, *I am ſuch or ſuch a dignified perſon amongſt my fellow mortals!*

Many value themſelves upon their DESCENT and ANCESTRY—we are of ſuch a line—noble or royal blood runs in our veins—and we are the honourable of the earth—as if any merit belonged to them for what they could neither order or hinder.

And what multitudes value themſelves upon THE POMP AND PARADE OF LIFE!—becauſe they are arrayed ſumptuouſly, and feed delicately—becauſe their outſide is finely trimmed and adorned—and others are commanded by them, and bow before them.

Theſe are the things that poor mortals uſually look big upon; and eſtimate themſelves and one another by: And accordingly were they aſked what they would pitch upon to give themſelves weight and conſequence, they would anſwer—we would have certain ſhares of comelineſs, beauty, and proportion, to be objects of admiration to others—we would be richly attired, that we may admire ourſelves—we would have the wealth of our neighbours,

that

that meaner perſons might be held in dependence upon us, and ſubmiſſion unto us—we would have ſpacious houſes—great eſtates—high connections and alliances, to give us eminence in the world, and to enable us to direct or controul the motions and politics of it.

But theſe are all ALIEN things: they are alien and foreign to the true dignity of man. The right and fair eſtimation of any of us, is not to be taken from theſe things. Of all theſe we may ſay with St. Peter, *All fleſh is graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs: the graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away* *. We have that to value ourſelves upon, and to be proud of,

* 1 Pet. i. 24.

that

that as much tranſcends all theſe things, as a diamond excels duſt, or gold a feather. MAN! GOD calls THEE to be HIS FRIEND, and aſſures thee that HE is THINE—and inſtructs thee in the method of improving this FRIENDSHIP, and carrying it on to all eternity! HERE IS THY GREATNESS!

To ſuperficial men who are caught with external ſhew, as if all the greatneſs of man aroſe from that—while they overlook the dignity of the immortal ſoul, formed for divine contemplation and converſe—to them we may ſay as JESUS to the PHARISEES — *Ye fools and blind! did not he that made that which is without make that which is within alſo* *? Ye ignorant, infatuated

* Luke xi. 40.

creatures,

creatures, who take ſo much pains about waſhing the OUTWARD part of you—do ye indeed not know that ye have an INWARD part, the work of the ſame Almighty hand, infinitely more excellent in its own nature, and therefore proportionably more worthy of your attention and care? In like manner may we aſk, are men indeed ignorant of the real excellence that they poſſeſs in an immortal ſoul, and its proper employments and improvements, that they value themſelves ſo much, value themſelves entirely, upon what has no higher origin than the earth, nor any farther reference than to a corruptible body?

Let all conſiderate and ſerious men KNOW their true excellence, and ASSERT it. Let all ſuch lift

up

up themſelves, and tell the world, that they can uſe its good things for their preſent purpoſes, but that they ſcorn them as any ſuitable portion: and that however delightful ſuch good things may be as the accommodations of their pilgrimage, they are not to aim at their hearts. Let all that are in actual FRIENDSHIP with GOD eſpecially, tell the world, when it makes its inadequate or its criminal offers, and ſays, *all theſe things will I give if ye will worſhip me*—that they know where to be better ſupplied—that they have all that IT can offer, and more than it can offer in their divine FRIEND—and that in his company and fellowſhip, there are ſweeter pleaſures—more excellent honours—and more ſubſtantial bleſſings, than the world ever gave, or knew of. This

will

will be true greatneſs — the ſpirit and language of perſons ſenſible of the exalted privilege of FRIENDSHIP with DEITY, and diſdaining every thing that would attempt to rival it, or break in upon it.

II. THE life that we live in this frail body is entirely conſiſtent with a very NOBLE and EXALTED KIND OF LIFE. This body with all its infirmities and incumbrances, allows capacity and opportunity for intercourſe with THE FATHER OF SPIRITS. Though it be comparatively a mean and incommodious manſion, it does not hinder us from purſuing great deſigns, and enjoying pure and very ſublime pleaſures. GOD has made it our TEMPORARY DWELLING; and WE muſt take care that we do not make it our DORMITORY,

or

or our GRAVE: in which for our heaven-born ſouls to forget themſelves: and their amazing and angelic powers to be buried and conſumed. Notwithſtanding the weakneſs and meanneſs of its tabernacle of clay, the ſoul of man may follow its own grand and appropriate intereſts—and enjoy its own proper and noble gratifications. There are the pleaſures of devotion for THAT, as well as meats and drinks, and refreſhments for the body. GOD has not dealt ſo unequally by the two conſtituent parts of our frame, as to provide ſuitably for the inferior appetites, and leave the more excellent principle ſurrounded only with ſuch things as degrade it, and render it unhappy.

Come then, O man, whoſoever thou art, whoſe generous ſpirit is ready to look down with a ſort of conſcious deſpiciency upon thy preſent condition — come, and learn how to aggrandize thyſelf—and how to make fallen humanity ſtill wear an honourable and a pleaſing aſpect. Thou art not yet ſunk from ALL the privileges of thy creation and primitive condition: thou haſt no occaſion to herd with the brutes, as if thou hadſt no higher deſtination, nor to be ingulphed in carnal pleaſures, as if thou hadſt no higher portion. GOD HIMSELF courts thy communion and FRIENDSHIP: he offers himſelf to thy view in every creature, and ſeeks to attract thee by every favour: FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ſubſiſts in the world: and this brings the felicity of angels down

to

to the dwellings of men. How great does ABRAHAM appear! ABRAHAM *the* FRIEND *of* GOD. How great does ENOCH appear! ENOCH *walked with* GOD. How great does it make the apoſtles appear! *I have called you* FRIENDS. How greatly is MOSES dignified! MOSES, *the man of* GOD. And theſe high and intereſting connections with DEITY which have ſubſiſted in the world, may always ſubſiſt. Thou mayeſt have THY ſhare in all this honour and happineſs. Break through thy priſon walls then—look through the veil of fleſh that is thy preſent covering—and above men that are thy preſent aſſociates — claim kindred with the GOD of the univerſe, and give a greatneſs to thy condition in THIS world, by thy fellowſhip with ANOTHER—have thy *converſation in heaven*—

heaven—and thus ennoble and improve thy life upon earth.

III. We ſhould aſpire after a life thus dignified and bleſſed with divine FRIENDSHIP, becauſe this was our original excellency and felicity. I obſerved at the beginning of this treatiſe, that FRIENDSHIP with GOD was the temper and bleſſedneſs of man in his ſtate of innocence and paradiſe. Now how ſhould we aſpire after this temper, and conſequent bleſſedneſs again! Eſpecially encouraged by the conſideration of there being a glorious Mediator appointed on purpoſe to bring us back to it! It is always reckoned a commendable ambition when men endeavour (by fair and honeſt methods) to riſe again to any heights of eminence from which they have fallen.

Let

Let me, then, apply this to the preſent caſe. Is it not indeed commendable, for every man to uſe his beſt endeavours for being (to a certain degree) what GOD made the firſt man; a compound of light and love—of knowledge, devotion and duty? Such was man in his firſt eſtate—and though now his degeneracy is great and apparent—though now we have comparatively only the maimed ſtrokes of the lovely and perfect picture—yet ſurely we ſhould be enquiring after, and liſtening to, the probable means of our reſtoration. We ſhould daily be full of thought how we may again become what we originally were. We ſhould aſk, is there no poſſibility of this? And if we are in good earneſt in the enquiry, the infallible word of GOD will reſolve the queſtion to our peace

and

and ſatisfaction: and will tell us that we may be the FRIENDS of GOD again, and may enjoy again all the bleſſedneſs of that relation. Man ſhould be aſhamed of his preſent degenerate ſtate, becauſe he was created in a purer and a nobler one. DEGRADATION always implies DISHONOUR and SHAME. And in the preſent inſtance, without our ſincere and vigorous attempts for a recovery, our ſhame will be entailed upon us for ever. Therefore all ſuch as will not be recovered from the common apoſtacy, and be reduced to their allegiance to GOD, and live in FRIENDSHIP with him in this preparatory ſtate, are ſaid, when they riſe from the dead, to *awake to ſhame and everlaſting contempt* *: Shame, perpe-

* Dan. xii. 2.

tuated

tuated under the eye and obſervation of holy and immortal angels; glorious creatures, who muſt reſent mens refuſal of recovering goodneſs hereafter; as they rejoice at their repentance and converſion now. It is no ſhame to a creature which was always mean and ignoble, that it is ſo at the preſent moment. But that man, formed after the image of GOD, ſhould loſe that image, and become a part of the ſerpent's ſeed—this we ſhould think of with a generous indignation. An excellent perſon and a Philoſopher*, ſtruck with the infelicity and depravity of the preſent ſtate, ſaid, "That he in a manner "BLUSHED at the recollection of his "being in the body." This ſhewed a refined and an elevated ſpirit. A

* Plotinus.

ſimilar

ſimilar ſentiment we ſhould adopt: and ſhould BLUSH at reflecting, that whereas man was once a holy and a happy being, he is now unholy and depraved, and conſequently unhappy: out of FRIENDSHIP with GOD, and uncomfortable in himſelf: and ſhould be enquiring, how what has been loſt may be regained —and what is defective be ſupplied. What an ambition do men diſcover for regaining the credit of their family, or of their country! Let us be actuated by a ſtill more enlarged zeal—a zeal for the credit and intereſt of mankind—and under the power of this liberal principle, let us aſpire, and urge others to aſpire after the renewal of that FRIENDSHIP with GOD, the loſs of which is the comprehenſive miſery of the fall. This we ſhall do, if we have

any

any ſenſe of human greatneſs—any remembrance of our divine original—any breathings of our ancient hope *.

* Mr. Howe.

CHAP. VIII.

MOTIVES *to* FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. *The ambition of it is* NATURAL, COMMENDABLE. *This* FRIENDSHIP *confers true* HONOUR. *It yields the higheſt* PLEASURE. *To ſeek and cultivate it is the part of* GRATITUDE. *It is abſolutely* NECESSARY *to us.*

I. THE ambition of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD is a NATURAL ambition. He is not worthy of being called a MAN that is not ambitious of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. To forſake our own glorious original—lightly to eſteem the GOD that formed us—and to be lightly eſteemed of him in return—theſe things

things ſubject to the very deepeſt reproach—as being repugnant to all the dictates and wiſhes of pure and uncorrupted nature. What is more natural between parent and children—governor and ſubjects—the benefactor and ſuch as are obliged to him—than FRIENDSHIP? The neglect of FRIENDSHIP, and eſpecially the prevalence of diſaffection, where theſe relations ſubſiſt, would fill the world with confuſion. How ſolicitous are men to be approved of *the fathers of their fleſh?* and how much more ſhould we covet the approbation and FRIENDSHIP of the adorable *Father of our ſpirits!* Let us then never be at reſt till our ſpirits tend to GOD in ſincere and ſtrong aſpirations after his favour. Let us never be ſatisfied with the ſtate of our own minds till

a deſire of divine FRIENDSHIP prevail over all our other deſires, and account ourſelves wanting in one capital characteriſtic of GOD's creatures and children, until we prefer him above our chief joy. Let us be aſhamed of calling ourſelves THE OFFSPRING OF GOD, while, with *the unthinking generality*, we ſeek every thing more than a mutual complacency between ourſelves and our divine parent—or while, *with prophane and impious ſinners*, we live as if we meant to put a contempt upon the well-pleaſedneſs and love of our maker. Let us account a CONCERN or UNCONCERN about the FRIENDSHIP of heaven, the indication of a NATURAL or UNNATURAL ſtate of mind; and let us try our ſpirits and be SATISFIED or DISSATISFIED with them accordingly.

An

An UNNATURAL ſtate of mind will always be an unhappy one; and ſuch ours will be till the DIVINE FRIENDSHIP be ſupremely deſired by us.

II. THE ambition of DIVINE FRIENDSHIP is as COMMENDABLE as it is natural. It will put us upon nothing but what will ſecure both our honour and our peace: will act in no way but what both heaven and earth will juſtify and approve. In ſeeking the FRIENDSHIP of men there is always PAIN, and oftentimes GUILT: a conformity to them in their humours, their weakneſſes, or their vices, is too frequently the hard condition of keeping in their good graces. But GOD is PERFECT and HOLY; and therefore while we aim at getting or keeping his FRIENDSHIP, we ſhall do nothing but what

is good and great. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the* LORD *thy* GOD *require of thee but to do juſtly and love mercy.*—So doing, thou mayeſt be ſaid to WALK WITH HIM*: to be his FRIEND and aſſociate. How ſtrong an incentive is this to a ſolicitude about GOD'S FRIENDSHIP—that it will put a man upon nothing but what is in itſelf excellent! and how much is it to be lamented, that men will ſeek each other's FRIENDSHIP and favour by a ſeries of fooliſh and hurtful luſts which in the end drown them in perdition—but will not ſeek the FRIENDSHIP of DEITY, although the means of obtaining and enjoying THAT are equally ſucceſsful and reputable. Men may well be confounded at the reflection of their

* Micah vi. 8.

having

having ſought the FRIENDSHIP of their fellow mortals with great uncomfortableneſs, and perhaps with ſome diſhonourableneſs, while the ambition of divine favour has been extinguiſhed in their boſoms—or been ſacrificed to meaner affections and deſires, although the means of obtaining IT are (like the fruits of it) noble and glorious.

III. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD confers the very higheſt HONOUR: and this is a further motive for our cultivation of it. GOD is the fountain of HONOUR as well as of LIFE: and therefore the cloſer and ſtricter our connections with him are, the greater luſtre is reflected upon us. GOD reminded the Jewiſh church of the infinite advantage derived to it from its intimate relation to him. *Since thou*

waſt precious in my ſight—and I loved thee—thou haſt been HONOURABLE: *therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life* *. The fate of nations ſhall ſubſerve thy intereſt and benefit. Upon this account it is that the righteous are the excellent of the earth—and more excellent than their neighbours—they go through the world in better company—in a HIGHER WALK OF LIFE. The honour of heaven itſelf is exhibited under the idea of divine converſe and FRIENDSHIP:—*thou haſt a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they ſhall* WALK WITH ME *in white; for they are worthy* †. PAUL meant to MAGNIFY both his conduct and himſelf, when he ſaid, *the life which I*

* Iſaiah xliii. 4. † Rev. iii. 4.

now

now live in in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of GOD *. Faith, and FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD and the Redeemer, will give ſplendour to our characters. All ye that have a paſſion for HONOUR then, come and ſeek it here. Let AMBITION make you religious—your ambition will never have ſo juſt or ſo ample a province to exert itſelf in, as religion affords. Where is the wiſe man? We may aſk this ironically; while we ſee men endeavouring to aggrandiſe themſelves by every connection but FRIENDSHIP with their Maker. A certain nobleman of our own country †, was ſo charmed with the fine temper and genius, of that rare and accompliſhed perſon, SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, that he would have

* Gal. ii. 20. † The Lord Brooke.

no other inſcription on his tomb than, HERE LIES SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S FRIEND. Let my tomb tell, and tell TRULY, that a FRIEND of GOD lies in it—and this will be more than if it was adorned with all the TROPHIES of WAR, or EMBLEMS of SCIENCE. HOW HONOURABLE! To live in this world and be admitted as VISITANTS to a better! How HONOURABLE! When in point of our real and pleaſing intercourſe with DEITY, THAT may be ſaid unto us —YE ARE COME TO GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL *! And when, in virtue of a raiſed and heavenly frame of mind, we are (according to St. PAUL'S manner of expreſſing himſelf) actually *raiſed up* from the dead, and *made to ſit together in heavenly places* †:

* Heb. xii. 23. † Epheſ. ii. 6.

this

this is in a certain ſenſe true when our EARTHLY places and ſtations are dignified with HEAVENLY connections and affections. The ſoul that is habituated to divine converſe—THAT SOUL poſſeſſes the higheſt honours—it poſſeſſes its own high and appropriate honours—and ſhines by a reflection of the glorious excellencies of its Maker.

IV. THE PLEASURE, as well as honour, there is in FRIENDSHIP with GOD, is a further reaſon for our deſiring to enter into it, and be eſtabliſhed in it. SOLOMON deſcribes the exhilarating influence of FRIENDSHIP thus: *iron ſharpeneth iron, ſo a man ſharpeneth the countenance of his* FRIEND*—removes the furrows from

* Prov. xxvii. 17.

his

his brow, and the ſadneſs from his heart. Agreeably to this declaration of the reviving effect of FRIENDSHIP, we read of *the light of* GOD'S *countenance lifted up upon his ſervants*; and of *their faces being lightened thereby* *—all impreſſions of ſorrow, fear and ſhame, inſtantly forſaking them. The apoſtle JOHN ſpeaks with apparent rapture—*we have known and believed the love which* GOD *hath to us* †. Moſt certainly our pleaſure and ſatisfaction will increaſe in proportion to the degree in which we are conſcious that the divine affection of LOVE prevails in us towards GOD; or ſee cauſe for believing that GOD bears that affection towards us. PEACE and JOY conſtitute two thirds of GOD'S kingdom within us: that king-

* Pſ. iv. 6.—xxxiv. 5. † 1 John iv. 16.

dom

dom by the laws of which he rules us, and in which we yield ourſelves to him as his ſubjects and FRIENDS: and muſt not a moſt happy inward ſtate be the reſult of all? The FRIENDS of GOD are commanded to REJOICE *in the* LORD, and that ALWAYS*: and is not ALLOWED and PERPETUAL JOY a great matter, and a great recommendation of any character or ſtate in which it is to be found? But I enlarge not on this head: having already ſpoken of DELIGHT in GOD both as belonging to FRIENDSHIP with him, and ariſing from it.

V. WE ſhould be FRIENDS of GOD, becauſe we in GRATITUDE owe him our FRIENDSHIP. Should his GLORY ſhine before us unregard-

* Philip. iv. 4.

ed?

ed? And his GOODNESS paſs by us unheeded? Tranſcient and infrequent favours are often forgot—but ſurely INCESSANT beneficence ſhould have irreſiſtible power, and ſubdue all before it. *A gift hath grace in the ſight of every man* *. *A man's gift maketh room for him* †. And do we want this incitement to our making the great GOD lovely in our eyes, and giving him a place in our hearts? Or ſhall the immenſe and unlimited bounty of GOD fail of thoſe returns which the ſcanty and partial favors of men uſually command? THE BANDS OF LOVE are called THE BANDS OF A MAN ‡; human nature being generally drawn by them, and conſentingly held in them: and ſhall

* Eccles. vii. 33. † Prov. xviii. 16.
‡ Hoſea xi. 4.

theſe bands looſe their power when GOD would detain us in them? Shall his SUN ſhine around us, in ſtrength and glory, and not kindle in our hearts the ſpark of FRIENDSHIP to HIM, of whoſe benignity he is the miniſter, and of whoſe brightneſs he is the inexpreſſive image? Shall ſhowers of mercy, abundant and numerous as thoſe which water the earth, fall upon us, and yet leave us unfruitful in this moſt reaſonable and moſt natural affection? Let every grateful ſentiment and feeling riſe and forbid it. How juſtly may GOD ſtop the communication of ſuch bleſſings from himſelf to us, as cannot lead us up to him! How juſtly diſcontinue that bounty which gives him no intereſt in us, or hold upon us!

VI. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD is abſolutely NECESSARY to us—and this is a very urgent motive to the cultivation of it.—*They that are far from him ſhall periſh* *. We may be in FRIENDSHIP with EARTH, and in league with HELL: but *in his favour is life* †. Should not poor creatures who have a property in nothing that their happineſs depends upon, ſeek a FRIENDSHIP with him who has all things at his diſpoſal? Should not he have our hearts in whoſe hand our breath is? Why man thou art under a ſentence—thou art under HIS ſentence—and wilt thou not make him THY FRIEND? O do it immediately: remember, while he is ſoliciting thy FRIENDSHIP, he can open the doors of the other world upon

* Pſ. lxxiii. 27. † xxx. 5.

thee

thee—call thee into his preſence, and puniſh thee for thine enmity—conſider the danger of delay, and acquaint thyſelf NOW with him, and be at peace, that good may come unto thee. We cannot have ALL that we want in ANY mortal FRIEND: no, nor in ALL OF THEM put together—their vigilance cannot always ſecure us—nor their kindneſs in all caſes ſupply us. But it is the tranſcendent attribute of *him that keepeth Iſrael, that he neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps* *: and the treaſury of his goodneſs will anſwer every demand, that poverty, pain, ſickneſs, or fear, can make upon it. Hear how St. PAUL magnifies the ſufficiency of divine liberality: MY GOD *ſhall ſupply* ALL your *need according to his* GLORIOUS

* Pſ. cxxi. 4.

RICHES,

RICHES, *by* CHRIST JESUS *. MY GOD can do this—how desirable and important a FRIEND is he! We may be happy without riches—we cannot always be happy with them—they will not stay with us to make us so. *Riches make to themselves wings, and flee away* †. MAKE TO THEMSELVES WINGS—what words can better express the uncertainty and capriciousness of the world's smiles! We cannot always be happy in the best FRIENDS—there are times and circumstances in which they cannot BEFRIEND us—we want one that can take us where they leave us—at the struggles of death—at the edge of the grave. GOD is a NECESSARY FRIEND.

* Philip. iv. 19. † Prov. xxiii. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Some DIRECTIONS *for the more advantageouſly preſerving* FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. *We muſt maintain* DEEP HUMILITY *in the courſe of it—we muſt pay a conſtant regard to the* MEDIATION *of* CHRIST—*we muſt maintain high and honourable thoughts of* PROVIDENCE—*make a good uſe of its* BOUNTIES—*be frequent in acts of* REPENTANCE—*aſpire after greater degrees and habits of* PURITY.

I. WE muſt be HUMBLE. GOD ſelects the humble man for his FRIEND in preference of

of any other. *I dwell in the high and holy place with* HIM ALSO *that is of a contrite and* HUMBLE *ſpirit* *. Humility muſt accompany all our EXERCISES of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. Notwithſtanding the freeneſs and familiarity of the FRIENDSHIP that ſubſiſted between them, DAVID did not forget that JONATHAN was a king's ſon; and paid him the tribute of profound reſpect and obeiſance in the midſt of their mutual endearments. DAVID *aroſe and fell on his face to the ground, and* BOWED HIMSELF *three* times †. We muſt in like manner preſerve and expreſs unfeigned reverence in all our tranſactions with GOD, and approaches to him as a FRIEND. Though we may come with a certain

* Iſa. lvii. 15. † 1 Sam. xx. 41.

BOLD-

BOLDNESS to the throne of his grace, we muſt not come with IMPUDENCE and RUDENESS. Though we may pray FERVENTLY, we muſt pray MODESTLY. Though we praiſe him with WARMTH and AFFECTION, it muſt be with VENERATION alſo—and while we plead his promiſes with FAITH, we muſt alſo do it with SUBMISSION. We ſerve GOD ACCEPTABLY even as FRIENDS, when we ſerve him with REVERENCE and GODLY FEAR—and if we do not preſerve ſuch reverence and fear in our intercourſe with him, we manifeſt a weak and blameable ſpirit—we ſhew that we cannot bear condeſcenſion—that we are for treſpaſſing upon grace and clemency: and we may expect to be treated by GOD, as we ſhould certainly in ſuch caſes be treated by men, viz. to have our ſervices refuſed,

fuſed, our petitions denyed, and to be kept at greater diſtance. FEAR THE LORD AND HIS GOODNESS * is a line that every true FRIEND of GOD ſhould wear deeply inſcribed upon his heart. GOD *is in heaven and we upon earth* †: we muſt not therefore ruſh irreverently into his temple, or be raſh and haſty in our words there. He will quickly behold and reſent the affront. FRIEND! *How cameſt thou in hither not having a wedding garment* ‡? Why appeareſt thou before me without the proper attire and the true ornaments of a worſhipping ſoul—compoſed thoughts—holy affections—a ſolemn and collected frame?

* Hoſea iii. 5. † Eccleſ. v. 1.
‡ Matt. xxii. 12.

GOD

GOD does not forget his tremendous majeſty, when he makes the moſt encouraging declarations of his condeſcending mercy—he does not forget that he is THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE THAT INHABITETH ETERNITY, when he declares his diſpoſition to DWELL WITH THE HUMBLE AND THE CONTRITE; and WE ſhould not forget it.

In order to promote a ſpirit of pure and deep humility in all our religious intercourſe with GOD in the character of our DIVINE FRIEND, let us treaſure up in our minds ſome of the ſcripture repreſentations of his incomparable and unſpeakable grandeur. ISAIAH in all the aſtoniſhing imagery of a prophet's pen, deſcribes the vaſt mountain of LEBANON as kindled up into one hallowed

lowed fire—and the numberleſs BEASTS of it conſuming in one immenſe ſacrifice—and ALL NATIONS OF MEN, as gathered together to attend the ſolemnity. Theſe are images awfully magnificent; but yet inadequate to the prophet's thoughts: which aggrandiſed by the contemplation of that ETERNAL MAJESTICK GOD whoſe oracle he was, grew too big for any thing actually created, yea, or boundleſſly imagined to expreſs—for he adds, with the ſame ſublimity of ſentiment—*All theſe things are as nothing* *! But let us attend to the lofty ſtile in which GOD proclaims himſelf. I AM THAT I AM! Tell the children of ISRAEL that I AM hath ſent you to them—the being who exiſts in

* Iſa. xl. 15, &c.

ſo

ſo excellent, tranſcendent, and peculiar a manner, as to make all other exiſtence vaniſh before him. I AM HE: I AM THE FIRST, I ALSO AM THE LAST *. I AM GOD AND THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME †! This is the true voice of DEITY. ISAIAH had pronounced the pomp of TEN THOUSAND SACRIFICES—and the ſolemnity of AN ASSEMBLED WORLD—and the blaze of LEBANON when it ſhould be converted into one huge and amazing altar—to be before GOD AS nothing—GOD declares all to be IN FACT that very nothing which the prophet had told us it might be counted. He appropriates all EXISTENCE, as well as all DEITY and EXCELLENCE, to HIMSELF: and

* Iſa. xlviii. 12. † Iſa. xlv. 21.

leaves only the umbrage and ſhadow of being to the creatures. This is the GLORIOUS GOD that we are allowed to call FRIEND: and does not PROFOUND HUMILITY become us in all the profeſſions, ſentiments and exerciſes of our FRIENDSHIP towards him, and in the whole of our walk before him?

Accordingly, the FRIENDS OF GOD have always been HUMBLE men: their very FRIENDSHIP with him has made them ſo: the calm contemplation of his infinite glories has made them as nothing in their own eyes. Obſerve the reverence of ABRAHAM's ſpirit, when allowed even to ſpeak to GOD—*Behold now, I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the* LORD, *which am but duſt and aſhes!—O let not the* LORD *be angry and*

and I will ſpeak!—O let not the LORD *be angry and I will ſpeak yet but this once* *!—MOSES intreated a ſight of the GLORY of GOD—GOD proclaimed his MERCY in the ſeveral methods of its vouchſafement, anſwerably to the ſins and miſeries of men: MOSES *made haſte, bowed his head to the earth, and worſhipped* †. JOB after GOD's lofty and FRIENDLY conference with him out of the whirlwind, expreſſes the like ſelf-abaſement and humiliation—*Now that mine eye ſeeth thee*—(now that I have heard thee ſpeak, and from thy lips diſcern a ſcanty portion of thy glory) *I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes* ‡. ISAIAH's viſion in the temple, of the Lord's

* Gen. xviii. 23, &c. † Ex. xxxiv. 8.
‡ Job xlii. 5.

Majeſty, and the proclamation he heard made of his purity, by exalted and celeſtial creatures, produced in him a like frame and ſtate of mind with what GOD's other ſervants profeſſed. — The glorious ſights and ſounds made him ſtartle at his own meanneſs and guilt. *Wo is me— I am undone—I am a man of unclean lips—and I dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips—and mine eyes have ſeen the king, the* LORD *of hoſts* *.

II. As we would carry on FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD in a proper and advantageous manner—we muſt pay a conſtant regard to the MEDIATION of CHRIST. This we ſhall do, if we have that true and deep humility, which I have been recommending.

* Iſaiah vi. 5.

With

With the temper and influence of humility, we ſhall rejoice that there is a greater and worthier—a divine perſon—ſtanding between us and the moſt high GOD; BY WHOM for the profeſſions and acts of our FRIENDSHIP to aſcend to God, and the valuable fruits of his FRIENDSHIP to deſcend upon us. I obſerved at the beginning of this treatiſe, that the reſtoration of FRIENDSHIP between GOD and man, was the very buſineſs upon which CHRIST came into our apoſtate world—and for the re-eſtabliſhment of this FRIENDSHIP, he has made ample proviſion by his ſufferings and death. Theſe are ſtrong expreſſions, and can never be explained away—*he hath made* PEACE *by the* BLOOD OF HIS CROSS—BY HIM *hath* GOD *reconciled all things unto himſelf, whether they be things in earth,*

or things in heaven—and you that were ſome time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled IN THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH *. We are FRIENDS of GOD not only by the renovation of our own ſpirits, but by virtue of ſome great purpoſe that the redeemer's death has anſwered in order to our becoming ſuch. *When we were enemies we were reconciled unto God*—BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON †.

Now, the ſame great perſon who by living and ſuffering in our world —dying out of it—and riſing again, has laid a foundation for that FRIENDSHIP between GOD and man ſubſiſting again, which the rebellion of the

* Coloſ. i. 20, &c. † Rom. v. 10.

latter

latter had forfeited and deſtroyed—the ſame great perſon, is deſcribed as aſſiſting us in all the exerciſes and offices of that FRIENDSHIP: and therefore we muſt be continually *looking unto him.* Who are they that are accepted now, and ſaved finally, but THEY THAT COME TO GOD BY HIM? Our PRAYER is to be offered in his name, according to his own direction *: and the ſacrifice of PRAISE which we render continually is to be BY HIM †. Our REPENTANCE muſt be expreſſed in obedience to his command, and encouraged by his promiſe. HOLINESS, the fruit of repentance, muſt be in conformity to his example, and enlivened and improved by the bright proſpects of immortality which he has given us.

* John xvi. 23. † Heb. xiii. 15.

We muſt be ALIVE to GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST *. The pleaſing exerciſes of HOPE, and JOY, are to be indulged, no otherwiſe, than with a ſpirit of unfeigned gratitude and thankfulneſs to Chriſt—for HE IS OUR HOPE †—and *we* JOY IN GOD *through our* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *by whom we have received the atonement* ‡. In a word, all that ſacred intercourſe with GOD which is the buſineſs and pleaſure of a Chriſtian's life, in the capacity of a FRIEND OF GOD, is to be carried on through JESUS as mediator. The ſame may be ſaid of all public ſolemnities and duties of religion: JESUS *is the way, and the truth and the life, and we muſt go to the* FATHER *by him* §:

* Rom. vi. 11. † 1 Tim. i. 1.
‡ Rom. v. 11. § John xiv. 6.

This

This is what GOD ORDAINS, as beſt befitting the honour of his own divine Majeſty. It is a reſerve becoming his greatneſs and purity, not to be approached in acts of religion and homage, even by them that he owns as FRIENDS, otherwiſe than by means of ſo holy and glorious a mediator as his own Son—the brightneſs of his glory—the partaker of his perfections—and the partner of his throne.

Beſides, there is an evident PROPRIETY in it, that JESUS who is at laſt in the nobleſt ſenſe to BRING US TO GOD—who is to introduce the FRIENDS OF GOD into THE EVERLASTING HABITATIONS—THE MANY MANSIONS—the PLACES PREPARED for them—there is an evident propriety in it, that this JESUS

ſhould be conſtituted the great MEDIUM of all our connections with GOD in a way of FRIENDSHIP and favour now.

It is, moreover, an ENCOURAGING CIRCUMSTANCE to us, that we betake ourſelves to GOD in FRIENDLY intercourſe upon EARTH, by that MEDIATOR who is to preſent us for final acceptance in HEAVEN: and whoſe conſummate worthineſs may recommend us and our ſervices when we are there.

Who will ſay that the mediation of CHRIST may not continue longer than our world ſhall continue? And be uſed as the MEAN of the ſaints joyful and confidential approach to GOD to all eternity? CELESTIAL CREATURES are deſcribed as ſome way

way intereſted in it, and benefited by it, as well as THE CHILDREN OF ADAM*: and who will ſay, that with reſpect to both, the intereſt and benefit may not be perpetual? I know indeed who hath told us, that *when the end cometh*, CHRIST *ſhall give up the kingdom to* GOD *even the* FATHER, *that* GOD *may in an eſpecial manner be* ALL IN ALL. But although the kingdom of CHRIST over our world muſt ceaſe with the world itſelf, and with thoſe deſigns which the world was made the theatre for accompliſhing—is there any thing unnatural in the ſuppoſition that his relation as MEDIATOR may be continued, to and amongſt his ſervants, after that they ſhall be glorified? Or, that in their ſolemn ſervices and

* Coloſ. i. 20.

triumphant

triumphant anthems a reverent regard ſhall not be paid to the SON OF GOD by all the ETERNALLY BLESSED? When they tender their loyal and obſequious homage—make the returns of their grateful and overflowing affection, to him that ſitteth upon the throne, for his rich and overflowing mercy—it may POSSIBLY—it may PROBABLY be, with ſome ſpecial reſpect to the redeemer—and ſome advantage from that relation to him, which was founded in his death, and ſubſiſted between themſelves and him in this world. If this ſuppoſition be admitted, it is in a very magnificent ſenſe, that the SON *is conſecrated* AN HIGH-PRIEST FOR EVERMORE *: if other orders of beings beſides the redeemed from

* Heb. vii. 28.

amongſt

amongſt men, be ſuppoſed benefited by this continued mediation, the grandeur and pleaſure of the thought do ſtill increaſe: and the preſcribed method of our approaching GOD through CHRIST at preſent, is made to look NOBLE as well as encouraging.

III. As we would live in FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD to the greater advantage and comfort—let us maintain high and honourable thoughts of his PROVIDENCE. Let us beware of ſuſpicion, and diſtruſt: theſe often weaken and ruin human FRIENDSHIPS—let them have no place in the divine. We know that the end of all GOD's works and ways ſhall be worthy of himſelf—and that it ſhall receive the full approbation of exalted and virtuous minds—let us not then

then ſuffer any thing that befalls us in our contracted ſtations and concerns, to militate againſt ſuch our faith and knowledge. When any thought ariſes in our minds that tends to a denial of GOD's goodneſs to us, or that would infer a diminution of it—let us be jealous of that thought. Let us lay it down as an incontrovertible maxim, that GOD is good to them that are of a clean heart: that he may afflict in the very faithfulneſs of his FRIENDSHIP: that he may mean the weight of affliction, as preparatory to the weight of glory: and that his goodneſs may be as real in what we ſuffer, as in what we enjoy. Let us collect the ſeveral inſtances of GOD's apparent and indubitable goodneſs, and have them ready at hand to oppoſe to our own erroneous fancies, and vitiating prejudices: this will

preſerve

preſerve the compoſure and ſettledneſs of our ſpirits, and therefore will be acting like FRIENDS both towards GOD and ourſelves. And with a thorough CONVICTION of the goodneſs of providence, let us accuſtom ourſelves to the ADMIRATION of it. Let adoring ſentiments poſſeſs our hearts, and, go through the world with us. Let us take confidence from GOD'S GENERAL goodneſs. *Seek him that maketh the ſeven ſtars, and Orion* *. He that guards the vaſt intereſts of the univerſe will never neglect or betray our little intereſts: as he delights in the proſperity of his ſervants, he will purſue their proſperity; though he may not always do it within the lines that they would draw for him—he WILL

* Amos v. 8.

be

be left to his own ſuperior and comprehenſive meaſures; but in the iſſue *all things ſhall work together for good to them that love him* *.

Such ſentiments of GOD and PROVIDENCE as theſe are, enter into the idea of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, and will greatly ſtrengthen and increaſe it.

IV. We ſhall carry on FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD in an advantageous manner—by a RELIGIOUS USE OF HIS BOUNTIES. We know the power of riches for making us FRIENDS in THIS world: and we may make FRIENDS by their means in ANOTHER. By a right uſe and application of them, we may purſue

* Rom. viii. 28.

the

the intereſts of both worlds at once. We may make GOD our FRIEND—for, *he is not unrighteous* to *forget our work and labour of love in miniſtring to his ſaints* *. *With ſuch ſacrifices*, viz. *doing good, and communicating*, GOD *is well pleaſed* †. We may make CHRIST our FRIEND—*inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me*. Our SAVIOUR intimates, that we may make OTHER FRIENDS in the next world the ſame way: may ſend ſuch FRIENDS before us, who ſhall be ready to *receive us to everlaſting habitations when all things here fail us* ‡. And how pleaſing and intereſting is the thought of our having FRIENDS in another world;

* Heb. vi. 10 † Heb. xiii. 16.

‡ Luke xvi. 9.

made

made SUCH, by our liberality to them in this! FRIENDS, that ſhall receive us with joy and gratitude, when we ſhall be turned out of all that we here poſſeſs! THEY may ſay for themſelves, as well as a condeſcending and benevolent SAVIOUR for them—WE *were hungry, and* YE *gave us meat*—WE *were thirſty, and* YE *gave us drink*—WE *were ſtrangers, and* YE *took us in*—*naked, and* YE *clothed us*—*ſick, and* YE *viſited us*—*In priſon, and* YE *came unto us* *. The laſt refreſhments we partook of in mortal life, were furniſhed out to us by the hands of your kindneſs and beneficence; and now we welcome you to a participation of our ſuperior enjoyments.

* Mat. xxv. 35.

For

For this reaſon are riches given to their poſſeſſors—that both GOD and men may be ſerved by them—GOD, by works of piety, and men, by works of charity. GOD gives the rich, both for their neceſſities, and their delights: and abridges them in nothing that in the eſtimation of reaſon and virtue, contributes to either: but then he inſiſts upon it, that as good ſtewards of his manifold good things, they uſe and apply the reſidue according to his directions. And what can be more equitable than this? If a mortal FRIEND entruſt me with a part of his ſubſtance, ought I not to uſe it agreeably to his will? And if inſtead of uſing it to certain worthy, and excellent purpoſes, as he commanded, I throw it away in methods that he diſapproves, and condemns, and has expreſſly forbidden

bidden—am not I moſt highly criminal? Unworthy of ſuch a man's FRIENDSHIP, and of all further marks of his confidence? Yet, faulty as this kind of conduct appears, it is the conduct of thouſands towards the great GOD every day. He entruſts them with his bounties; and they abuſe the truſt. He ſays, OCCUPY TILL I COME; and they diſbelieve, or forget, that he will ever come. He commands them, DO GOOD TO ALL, AND ESPECIALLY TO THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH; and they having ſerved themſelves, in the meaſure that their luſts and appetites demand, waſte the remaining abundance upon the worſt of characters—upon harlots, gameſters, and revellers. This perverſion and abuſe of riches will make both GOD and men their enemies: and will ſubject them to ſtrange

confuſion

confuſion and pain when the mandate ſhall come, GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THY STEWARDSHIP, FOR THOU SHALT BE NO LONGER STEWARD.

But the good uſe of riches, gives value and luſtre to a character, in the eyes both of heaven and earth. This will make GOD our FRIEND: he will conſider us, as what he intended we ſhould be—the almoners of his bounty, and the miniſters of his providence—rectifying, according to our power, thoſe inequalities in providence of which ſome ſo loudly complain: we ſhall have the very higheſt reliſh and enjoyment of riches while they remain with us: and when they make themſelves wings and fly away—their flight will be grand and beautiful; like that of an eagle towards heaven: they will

carry

carry a good report of us, beforehand, to the throne of judgment; and prove introductory to higher and better bleſſings. Having been faithful in LITTLE (for ſo the largeſt earthly poſſeſſions may be called) we ſhall be rewarded with MUCH—and having ſuitably improved the FALSE and FUGACIOUS MAMMON; ſhall have the TRUE RICHES committed to us—the riches of glory and immortality. We ſhall be conſidered as having approved ourſelves the FRIENDS OF GOD and goodneſs in this world, and GOD will be our everlaſting FRIEND in the world to come. The religious uſe of GOD's mercies is no more than JUSTICE—yet ſuch is his GENEROSITY, that he will take it for FRIENDSHIP, and reward it as ſuch. He will honour and reward meer FIDELITY as a

ſhining

ſhining and diſtinguiſhed virtue: WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!

V. If we would carry on FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD to advantage, we muſt be frequent in acts of REPENTANCE. It is the CONTRITE as well as humble ſoul, that God in an eſpecial manner looks to, and dwells with. The apoſtle JOHN amidſt all the rapture and triumph with which he ſpeaks of our fellowſhip with the FATHER, has theſe words: *and the blood of* JESUS CHRIST *his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin* *—from all ſuch ſins as might otherwiſe deſtroy that fellowſhip, or interrupt the comfortable exerciſe of it. GOD expects and knows, that

* 1 John i. 7.

there

there will be on our part, many violations of that FRIENDSHIP into which he enters with us; and therefore he has made this kind proviſion for their being healed. This proviſion then, let us make thankful uſe of, as occaſion requires. As often as we are conſcious to ourſelves that we have broke the laws of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, let us immediately go to him through JESUS CHRIST—acknowledge our fault—and aſk forgiveneſs. Let us be willing to aſk that pardon of GOD, in a way of religion, which in a like caſe, we ſhould aſk of men in a way of civility. Let no unacknowledged offence lie heavy on our ſpirits; to eſtrange us from GOD, or to abate our confidence in calling him FATHER. In human FRIENDSHIPS, very trifling circumſtances, have for

want

want of being properly excuſed, and apologized for, been conſtrued into ſerious faults: and many FRIENDSHIPS have ſtrangely worn off upon the ſlighteſt grounds, for want of a timely ſubmiſſion in the offending party: ſhyneſs increaſing on the one ſide, and reſentment on the other. Let us take care that FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD ſuffer not with us in this way. When we tranſgreſs againſt GOD, let us make up matters with him immediately: HE will be ſatisfied with ſuch ſubmiſſions as men with pride and caprice reject: who are oftentimes the harder to be won, in proportion to the degree in which their reconciliation is ſought and coveted. GOD will not treat us thus. Let us *confeſs our tranſgreſſions unto the* LORD, *and he will forgive*

the iniquity of our ſin *. GOD is the compaſſionate FATHER who will eſpy his returning prodigal at a diſtance—run and meet him—accept the ſcarcely finiſhed humiliation and apology—and renew the relation which the offender has diſgraced, and therefore dares not to claim. DAVID found it ſo: and propoſes his own ſucceſs for the encouragement of future penitents. *For this ſhall every one that is godly, pray unto thee, in a time when thou may ſt be found:* ſurely in the floods of great waters, they ſhall not come nigh unto him †.

VI. It is neceſſary to comfortable and advantageous FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, that we do continually aſpire

* Pſ. xxxii. 5. † Pſ. xxxii. 6.

after

after greater degrees and habits of PURITY. GOD is holy, and therefore his FRIENDS muſt be ſo. Hence the reaſonable and ſolemn charge, *ye that love the Lord hate evil* *. The prophet puts the queſtion, *Can two walk together, except they be agreed* †? The ſtrongeſt negation is here implied: no, they cannot. Iniquity has no fellowſhip with GOD. Unrighteous men may pretend FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD; and arrogate ſpecial ſhares of his FRIENDSHIP to themſelves: like thoſe who cried, *have we not eaten and drank in thy preſence* ‡? *But the* LORD *knoweth them that are his:* and we may know them too; they are ſuch as *depart from iniquity* §. The ſearcher of

* Pſ. xcvii. 10. † Amos iii. 3.
‡ Luke xiii. 26. § 2 Tim. ii. 19.

hearts can diſtinguiſh every enemy, although in the maſk of a FRIEND; as CHRIST diſtinguiſhed JUDAS: *I have choſen you twelve; but one of you is a devil* *—and there is a time coming when he will expoſe and publicly diſown the hypocrite—*I know you not whence you are—depart from me* †. With what a ſevere countenance does St. JOHN reprove all pretenſions of wicked men to the favour and FRIENDSHIP of GOD! *If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth* ‡. A GOOD MAN could ſay, *depart from me ye evil doers* ‖: and much more will a PERFECT and a HOLY GOD ſay it. If we are for a real advantageous

* John vi. 70. † Luke xiii. 27.
‡ 1 John i. 6. ‖ Pſ. cxix. 115.

FRIEND-

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, PURITY muſt be the baſis, the cement of that FRIENDSHIP.

And as our FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD muſt be begun, ſo alſo carried on in PURITY. *Cleanſe your hands, ye ſinners, and purify your hearts ye double minded; thus draw nigh to* GOD, *and he will draw nigh to you* *. Without the love of PURITY, and ſome degree of eſtabliſhment in the ſentiments and habits of it, we cannot have that COMPLACENCY in a HOLY GOD, which is included in FRIENDSHIP with him; and of which his GENUINE FRIENDS have always been examples. *Who is a* GOD *like unto thee,* GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS †*!—there is none holy as*

* James iv. 8. † Exod. xv. 11.

the LORD *. *Thou art not a* GOD *that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs: neither ſhall evil dwell with thee. The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight: thou hateſt all workers of iniquity* †. *Sing unto the* LORD, *O ye ſaints of his, and* GIVE THANKS AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS HOLINESS ‡. How can an unholy man adopt theſe ſentiments, and join in theſe triumphant acknowledgments! It is juſt in proportion to the degree in which holineſs is prevalent in us, that we are qualified for FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD on our part: and in the ſame proportion, GOD will repleniſh and bleſs us with the delights of that FRIENDSHIP. *With the* PURE *he will ſhew himſelf* PURE: *and with an* UPRIGHT

* 1 Sam. ii. 2. † Pſ. v. 4, 5.
‡ Pſ. xxx. 4.

MAN

MAN *he will ſhew himſelf* UPRIGHT *. PURITY is the glory of man—the image of GOD—this aſſimilates us to our divine and bleſſed original—by this we dwell in GOD, and have GOD dwelling in us—and by means of the copious and increaſing meaſures of it, we do in part enjoy in THIS world, the very happineſs that is promiſed to the righteous in another—*Bleſſed are the pure in heart*: FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

* Pſ. xviii. 26.

CONCLUSION.

I Bow my knees unto the FATHER *of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named* *—That condeſcending GOD deſerves our thanks, who is willing to unite all dutiful and obedient creatures, whether in heaven or on earth, into one family; dignified and bleſſed by one common relation to, and FRIENDSHIP with himſelf. While we reverence and adore the divine goodneſs in this article, let us aſk ourſelves, ARE WE INTERESTED IN THIS GOODNESS? ARE

* Epheſ. iii. 14, 15.

WE FRIENDS OF GOD? If our judgments and conſciences cannot ſafely tell us that we are, let us next aſk, ARE WE DESIROUS OF BECOMING HIS FRIENDS? If we are NOT deſirous of it, let us proceed in our enquiry, and demand of our own hearts the reaſons of our indifference, and diſaffection. Why will we aſſume the character of devils, and put ourſelves upon a level with them, to whom the propoſals of DIVINE FRIENDSHIP are not tendered? If we ARE deſirous of FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, let us go about eſtabliſhing it immediately. *Acquaint thyſelf* NOW *with him and be at peace*: do it NOW; for delays are dangerous to a proverb. Remember the fate of JERUSALEM: that city *knew not the day of its viſitation*; and therefore

fore inſtead of being intereſted in the benefit of the Saviour's blood, had only the unavailing compaſſion of his tears.

Perhaps you may ſay, we are actually FRIENDS of GOD. Are you? How do you ſhew this?—We ſometimes worſhip him—conſider, ſome who were loud in their cry, THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD! THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD! had no ſhare in the FRIENDSHIP of the great GOD of that temple. CEREMONIOUS VISITS are not reckoned for FRIENDSHIP: and yet they might paſs for it, abundantly better than ſome mens viſits at the houſe of their GOD. We, deſignedly, do nothing AGAINST GOD, may you ſay: we offer no outrage or affront, to him,

or to his inſtitutions—ſo far it is well: but if you do nothing FOR GOD, you are not worth the name of his FRIENDS: a NEUTRAL is not a FRIEND. We ſpeak of GOD with reſpect and honour—that alſo is very well: but let us not ſubſtitute fine words, and fair profeſſions in the room of the ſubſtantial duty which we owe him. We could not deal thus with our fellow creatures. Where are your actual ſervices—your chearful reſignations—your obedient ſubmiſſions—your delightful converſe—your confidential truſt?

If you are not ſolicitous about FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, and do nothing in order to attain to it, what are you ſolicitous about? And to what do your affections, cares and purſuits

purſuits tend? It is but loſt labour, to riſe early, and ſit up late, but not to obtain the loving kindneſs of the LORD. PLATO is ſaid to have been aſhamed at ſeeing a workman riſen before him. He could not bear that ſuch a man's TRADE ſhould go on faſter than his PHILOSOPHY. Can you feel no ſelf-indignation, in that, while meaner intereſts thrive with you, and inferior FRIENDSHIPS ſtrengthen, the grandeſt FRIENDSHIP of all is neglected by you? Is there no charm in the promiſe that is made to ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD—SO SHALL GOOD COME UNTO THEE *? All manner of GOOD ſhall come this way: no article of GOOD is excepted in the promiſe, and we

* Job xxii. 21.

ſhould

ſhould except none in our expectations and hopes.

You cannot be ſo great and high in the world, but GOD'S FRIENDSHIP will make you greater and higher: you cannot be ſo poor and depreſſed, but his FRIENDSHIP will ennoble and raiſe you. Poverty is enriched, and obſcurity is brightened, by one ſmile from him: *but if he hideth his face, who then can behold him*?* We may look fair in the eyes of the world and our condition ſeem ſhowey and enviable; but if we are under the frown of THE ALMIGHTY, that will either ſecretly conſume us, like a moth—or, like a lion, will tear all to pieces with viſible reſentment and fury.

* Job xxxiv. 29.

You

You would be glad (it may be) to live in FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, but you do not conſent to the CONDITIONS of enjoying it. We muſt deny ourſelves (you cry) in ſuch and ſuch purſuits and pleaſures. And what then? Are you ſure that virtuous ſelf-denial is an infelicity? Has unbounded indulgence always proved a happineſs to you? The reſtraints of Paradiſe were not ſo grievous to ADAM, as the being turned out of it: and he found himſelf much more of a ſlave in the wide wilderneſs of the world, than he had ever been in that incloſure into which GOD mercifully put him. Self-denial was the command of GOD, and was neceſſary to MAN, even in EDEN itſelf: and it is neceſſary ſtill. Without this, GOD cannot have his glory;

glory; nor his creature man, his moſt valuable enjoyment.

To cloſe all—let us remember that FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, is the proper temper of man in this preparatory ſtate—we are going to GOD; and therefore, muſt be FRIENDS of GOD. Our HEAVEN (if we ever have one) muſt be begun upon EARTH. It is by a reſtoration to ourſelves, and to our GOD now, that we are to enjoy ourſelves and him eternally. Let us be induſtrious in this our preparatory work, and GOD will work in us, and with us, OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE. He will aſſiſt us with pleaſure, and reward us with pleaſure.

As

As we improve in FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD, every thing will be FRIENDLY to us; both within, and about us. *The ſun ſhall not ſmite us by day, nor the moon by night* *:—*we ſhall be in league with the ſtones of the field: and the beaſts of the field ſhall be at peace with us* †. Every creature ſhall act in FRIENDLY concert with the great CREATOR, for our benefit; and be the miniſter of his goodneſs—not the inſtrument of his vengeance. We may command the tribes of the EARTH—and look up to the firmament of HEAVEN;—may challenge the ſervices of its glorious hoſts, and immortal angels—and call all things OURS, becauſe GOD ALMIGHTY is ſo.

* Pſ. cxxi † Rev. xxii. 14.

BLESSED

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS—THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY. All is open to THE FRIEND OF GOD.

THE END.

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